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THE UNITED
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LOUISIANA

Now!



NEWS,
OPPORTUNITIES AND
WITNESS OF LOUISIANA
CONFERENCE MINISTRIES

VOL. 2, NO. 1

BATON ROUGE, LA

January 12, 2001

Mediation offers new blessing to victims and offenders

BY REV. JOHN R. JOHNS
RESTORATIVE JUSTICE MINISTRIES

A new opportunity is coming to Louisiana that promises to bless many people. This resource, Victim/Offender Mediation, is designed to bring the victim and offender together, with a trained mediator, after a crime is committed. After separate interviews and training with the victim and the offender, the

mediator brings them together to work out a contract, which both can sign.

This method offers advantages to the victim, the offender and the community. Restorative Justice seeks to bring healing when there is a crime committed. The crime involves the victim, the offender and the community and healing can be brought about best by working with all three.

Mediation is beneficial to the victim in many ways. It allows an opportunity to receive new information about the crime. It provides a place to express anger and pain directly to the person responsible, putting a face to the person who committed the crime, thus decreasing the level of fear by personalizing the

see RESTORATIVE JUSTICE, page 8

ANNOUNCING Annual Conference 2001

June 3-6
Centenary College
Shreveport

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Giddyup!

The youth of Centenary UMC, in Franklinton, had a new and different vision for an outdoor Advent scene this holiday season. Although the manger scene is a common depiction, the group decided to create a near-lifesize representation of a donkey carrying Mary with Joseph leading the way to Bethlehem.

The youth worked every Sunday night from July to December to create the papier-mache display.

Art classes from Franklinton High School, led by their teacher Kay Bell, painted the details.

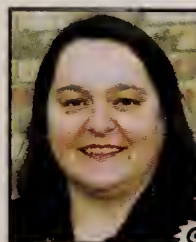
"I am very proud of our youth group and the people who encouraged this project," said pastor Rev. Lyndle Bullard. "We are proud to present it to the community of Franklinton to show the true meaning of this wonderful season of Advent."



Conference welcomes Backstrom as new editor of *La. Now!*

The Louisiana Conference is pleased to announce Betty Backstrom as its selection for the new editor of *La. Now!*.

Backstrom comes to the job with many years of communications experience with organizations such as the Audobon Girl Scout Council, *Baton Rouge Parents Magazine* and *The Advocate* in Baton Rouge.



Backstrom

"This is an important time for us with the Igniting Ministry media campaign, and Betty's public relations and development experience will aid us tremendously in this initiative," said

Dr. Rena Yocom, executive director, Conference Mission and Ministries.

"As a United Methodist, I am privileged to serve the Conference as communications specialist. I look forward to spotlighting the efforts of the Church as we share the Good News about Jesus Christ with every person," Backstrom said.

ON THE JOURNEY

Bubbly and Excited

I got just what I wanted for Christmas! A bubble-light night-light. You know, the kind that looks like those wonderful strings of lights we had back in the 1950s. You would plug them in, wait for the liquid in the vials to heat, and then watch them bubble away. The only problem came when one of them burned out. That meant the entire string of lights went out and it was a chore trying to decipher which one was the spent one. The other problem came when they wouldn't bubble at all. That called for a quick flick of the vial with your finger (like thumping your sibling on the head) and most of the time that started the bubbles. When I received the night-light, which I had seen in a gift store in Alexandria, I was elated.

I quickly plugged it in and waited for the magic to begin. Just like old times, nothing happened. I was ready to send it back

to the manufacturer when it finally started bubbling.

There it was in all its nostalgic glory. Red and green plastic casing around the light bulb itself and an orange-like liquid that had tiny bubbles ascending to the top. Yesterday had returned. Later I plugged it into the wall socket in my bathroom, and knew it would illumine my path throughout the night. It worked for a couple of nights and then one morning when I went to turn it off and give it a rest, there were no bubbles. It had already lost its "spizzarinctum!"

As I looked at the light with disappointment in my eyes and sadness in my heart I began to see it as a modern parable. Life is often like that night-light. We long for the old days and what was meaningful about them. We look for bubble-lights and other memories and think they will transport us to former days where we lived without worry or care. And then things happen that remind us that even those times had difficulties and disappointments too. The lights didn't always bubble.

Just as the lights in the past didn't always do as they were advertised, neither do some of the lights today. The new night-light performed its primary function. It shed light in a darkened room. It just didn't have the added feature of bubbling while it did it. Isn't that similar to our lives today, especially life in the church?

I don't know of a church today that doesn't at least try to perform its primary task. It sheds light in a darkened room and into darkened lives. It just sometimes lacks the added spark of a bubbling action in its main stream. People and pastors cast a glow about them that says, "This is a place where the light shines." But sometimes they



Bishop William W. Hutchinson

lack the energy of the bubbles. And people who are searching for light and new life seem to want the bubbles!

Here we are entering a new year and a new millennium. We have our primary task to perform.

We, the church, are to shed the light of Christ into the world. The smallest to the largest churches can and do perform that task. But wouldn't it be more attractive to those outside the walls to experience a bubbling sensation as well.

Wouldn't it be energizing if along with the light there were bursts of joy and excitement for the cause of Christ!

"Wouldn't it be glorious if the love of God just rose up to overflowing in our lives and in the lives of our churches until our spirits were so bubbly that we were accused of having had too much of the 'bubbly' itself!"

Wouldn't it be glorious if the love of God just rose up to overflowing in our lives and in the lives of our churches until our spirits were so bubbly that we were accused of having had too much of the 'bubbly' itself! Wouldn't that kind of joy begin to attract into our fellowships those who are searching for light?

It is my prayer as we enter into 2001 that we find ways to renew the spark within all of us and that the light of Christ will not only be present in our congregations, but that there will be the added bonus of bubbling joy that is welling up in pastors and parishioners alike that says we are the alive, excited and loving house of God.

And may we not have those burned out lights that make the whole string go dark, but may we all keep connected to the circuit and may our filaments stay intact!

Won't you join with me in prayer for continued revival in the churches throughout the world, and especially in Louisiana?

We have so much to give and so many who are hungry, thirsting and searching for that which we offer-energized light.

Let's pray that the bubbles won't fizzle out in us and that our lights will so shine that they will glorify our Father who is in heaven.

Happy New Year and a bubbling good time to all of you.

Bill Hutchinson



Exemplifying the best

Louisiana Conference Mission in Motion Coordinator Sarah Schoeffler was recently honored by *Interpreter*, a national United Methodist magazine, as one of 15 people who exemplify the best of The United Methodist Church. The editors cited her longstanding involvement in the field of disaster relief, dating from her coordination of response efforts after Hurricane Andrew. Schoeffler, who the magazine called a "lifeline" and a "disaster relief pro" is a member of First UMC, Lafayette.

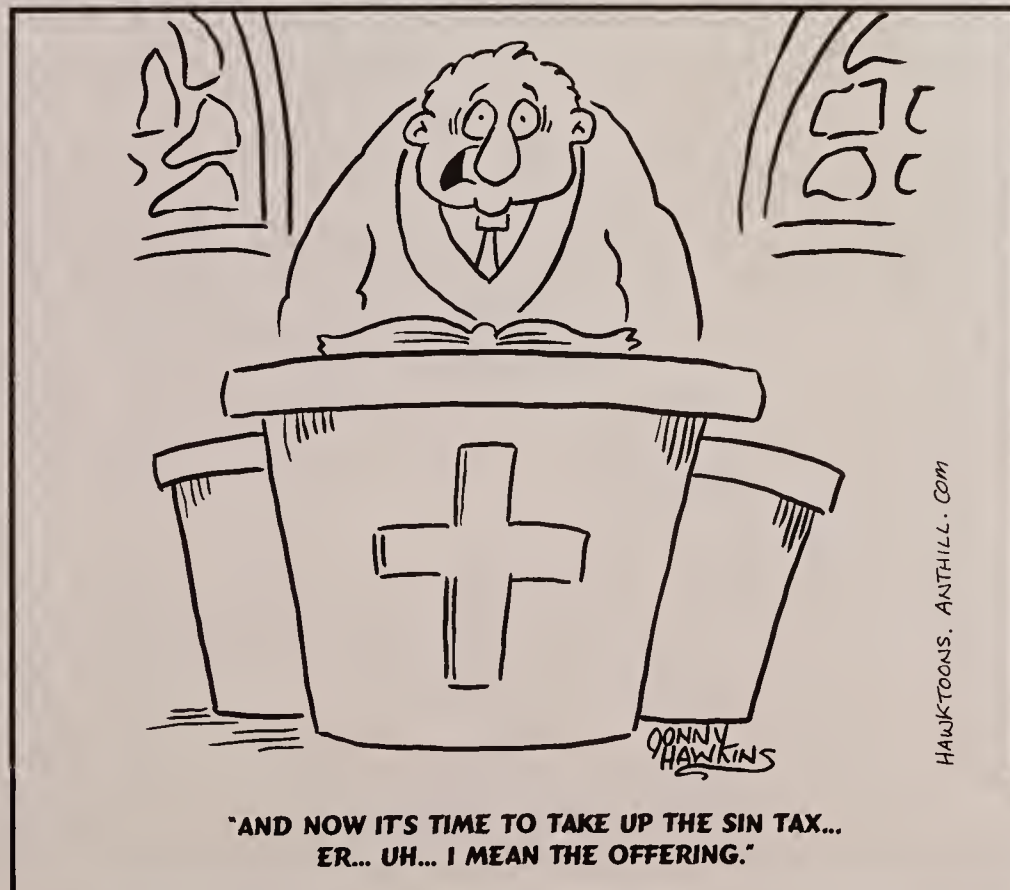
Notification of Retirement

Paragraph 356 of the 2000 *Book of Discipline* states that "requests for retirement shall be stated in writing to the bishop, cabinet, and board of ordained ministry at least one hundred twenty days prior to the date on which retirement is to be effective." If you plan to retire at the next session of Annual Conference, notification should be received by those listed above by Feb. 1, 2001. The processing of a clergy's retirement may be delayed if this timeframe is not met.

Correction

The Volunteers in Mission schedule provided last issue listed the wrong date for the for the mission to Dulac Cooperative, which will be held Mar. 25-29.

STAINED GLASS



"AND NOW IT'S TIME TO TAKE UP THE SIN TAX...
ER... UH... I MEAN THE OFFERING."

Rayne Memorial UMC, New Orleans, celebrates 125th anniversary

Rayne Memorial United Methodist Church, the stately red brick church with the majestic thirteen-story spire at 3900 St. Charles Avenue, will celebrate its 125th anniversary on January 14, 2001.

There will be one worship service at 11 a.m., with a presentation of a marker recognizing the church's place in the history of American Methodism.

A light buffet lunch will follow the service in Fellowship Hall, and all members and friends of Rayne are cordially invited.

Rayne began its existence as St. Charles Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church, South in 1875-76. When New Orleans annexed the town of Carrollton, a local Methodist lay preacher and merchant decided the Methodists needed a church along St. Charles Avenue to cater to new neighborhoods. Robert W. Rayne, who lived in the vicinity, took responsibility for building the Gothic revival sanctuary, which was designed by architect Charles Hillger and constructed by James Cox. Mr. Rayne covered almost half of the \$33,000 cost and his friends and family provided the rest. When he built the sanctuary on St. Charles Avenue, he dedicated it to the memory of his son, William, who died in the Civil War. Following the death of Robert Rayne, the church renamed itself Rayne Memorial in 1887.

Robert Rayne was born in Sunderland, England. After his emigration to the United States, Rayne, who had been licensed to preach in England, pursued various business interests in Massachusetts and Ohio before entering the wholesale shoe trade in New Orleans. Because of the success of his ventures and numerous landholdings in southwest Louisiana, Rayne prospered and he sought ways to give back to the church.

Because of ill health, Robert Rayne could not attend the dedication of the new church. In fact, Rayne would never see the sanctuary as he lost his sight due to illness. Nevertheless, Rayne played an

active part in the congregation, looking for the appropriate pastor to fill the pulpit of the church. As its first pastor, Bishop J. S. Keener appointed Dr. William Elbert Munsey, from Virginia, who was well known for his oratorical powers. Dr. Munsey held the position for about fourteen months, but his poor health prevented him from continuing in his appointment, and he returned to his family.

Over the years, Rayne Memorial has played an important role in the development of Louisiana Methodism. The church helped to organize Parker Memorial United Methodist Church and Carrollton United Methodist Church in New Orleans. A number of district superintendents have served as pastor of Rayne Memorial, and former associate pastor Ben Petty became a bishop. Dr. Franklin Parker, who grew up in the church and served as its pastor, enjoyed a long tenure as dean of Candler Divinity School.

Rayne has a rich heritage of services to the community over the years, not only in regular Sunday services, but in its Early Childhood Program, youth activities, senior programs, choral programs, and Singles on Sunday. An extensive Outreach Program works with Habitat for Humanity in building homes, the Salvation Army in providing interim housing for those temporarily unable to



provide for themselves, and the Second Harvesters Food Bank. Financial assistance to needy people, help with utility bills and prescriptions and other assistance is regularly provided. Rayne members also prepare food and help serve at neighborhood soup kitchens on a regular basis, bringing much-needed relief and comfort to those in need.

The church also opens its doors for groups who need a meeting place, such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Overeaters Anonymous, PFLAG, SAT Tutoring, the Fine Arts Club, and the Concert Choir of New Orleans to name a few. Many famed organists have conducted recitals on the church's Aeolian-Skinner organ, including Jean Langlais, Flor Peeters, and Virgil Fox.

The Rayne Membership also hosts a companion church, The New Orleans Korean United Methodist Church. The Korean Church meets in the Rayne Chapel each Sunday for services at 2

p.m. In addition, Rayne Memorial and the Mount Zion United Methodist Church on Louisiana Avenue share in a partnership ministry, joining together in worship and fellowship several times a year.

Wednesday night dinners are held weekly except for the summer months, with delicious meals and an interesting and timely program or speaker. Programs such as Vacation Bible School, youth mission trips, Kids' Club and the Prime Timers Program for seniors which include programs at the church and trips to nearby sites of interest, are held throughout the year.

One of the many anecdotes told about this lovely and durable church concerns a wedding scheduled for October 1, 1915. A tropical storm swept through the city on September 30. The sanctuary was flooded, the carpeting and cushions sodden with flood waters. However, this did not daunt the bride to be and her family. They worked through the afternoon and night sweeping out water, pulling up the ruined carpets and removing the soaked cushions. Frantic searches produced dozens of candles, and a beautiful, candle-lit service was held on time in the still wet and stripped down church. It was a wedding no one forgot! But the near disaster proved to be something of a blessing, because Rayne became a much lovelier church after repairs. Improvements included a recessed pulpit and organ loft, stained glass memorial windows, and electrical fixtures.

Rayne Memorial United Methodist Church holds regular services each Sunday at 8:45 and 11 a.m., with Sunday School at 9:45 a.m. and a Young Adults discussion class at 12:15 p.m. Senior Pastor is the Reverend Dr. Donald C. Cottrill. Associate Minister and Director of Christian Education is the Reverend Carol Sherer. Choir Master/Organist is John Hutton. All are welcome to come and worship in this truly historic and beautiful church.

Centenary College adds state-of-the-art fitness center

SHREVEPORT, LA — Centenary College's first-ever swimming pool and its state-of-the-art Fitness Center were cause for celebration in December during grand opening festivities in the new facility.

Dr. Kenneth L. Schwab, president, and William G. Anderson, chairman of the Centenary Board of Trustees, presided over the grand-opening ceremony in the gymnasium. Also speaking were Dr. Victoria LeFevers, chair of the Department of Health and Exercise Science, and Dawson Taylor, president of the Student Government Association. Members of the Centenary Brass Quintet and the Centenary Cheerleaders performed and Centenary Chaplain Jack O'Dell offered a dedicatory prayer.

The former Haynes Gymnasium was extensively remodeled and the building almost doubled in size to accommodate the new Fitness Center, although its facade on Kings Highway remains much the same as in the past. Just inside the

former entrance, the Haynes Conference Room reflects the past of the historic building.

The 25-yard, six-lane pool offers a stunning view of the Arboretum and the Peavy Gardens and Climbing Tower. The view is available, as well, to runners and joggers taking advantage of the raised running track on the second floor. Complete with a slip-resistant rubberized surface, the track travels almost an eighth of a mile around the inside of the building. On the south end, the view from the track opens to the gymnasium below.

The gym has been enlarged by taking in the space formerly occupied by the concrete bleacher area. It accommodates one college-size basketball court or two regulation-size high school courts.

Volleyball and badminton will be played there also. New bleachers are moveable to accommodate various activities.

Some of the beautiful old floor finds new life in the main entrance area, which opens to the east toward Cline Hall, and in the lobby areas near the elevator and the locker rooms/saunas. Also on the first floor are offices for the building manager and the faculty members of the Department of Health and Exercise Science. Additional features on the second floor include two racquetball courts, an aerobics room, a dance room, a free-weight area and a space for cardio and stack equipment. The basement will house four classrooms and an expanded and updated Rifle Team area.



The Centenary Fitness Center is the largest of six projects that were covered in a \$12 million bond issue designed to meet student needs and improve the campus.

It was completed in 18 months as a project of The Newman Partnership, architects, and McInnis Brothers Construction, Inc., general contractor.

DMT gains first-hand knowledge of global ministry at Sager-Brown

The North Shore District Ministry Team combined their 2001 planning session with a mission trip to Sager-Brown, located in Baldwin, LA. Since none of the members had ever been before, they felt it would be a perfect opportunity for them to get first-hand knowledge of this global ministry and to be directly involved in its mission.

Once there, one realizes the importance of this facility that sits "right in our own back yard". It is the only one of its kind that the Methodist church and UMCOR have in the US. Mickie Townsend, our gracious host, said that volunteers from all over the nation come there to work. It is a welcoming and inclusive place with good food and comfortable accommodations. Ironically enough, of all the states, Louisiana sends the fewest number of volunteers.

Mickie gave us interesting background historical information, led us on an extensive tour of the facilities, and shared her own personal testimony as well. It was a wonderful experience. All felt doubly blessed by a successful planning session and the hands-on mission activity of working in the depot. An added bonus was the team building that occurred as a result of getting to know one another better as we worshipped, sang, prayed and worked side by side.

The Sager-Brown Orphanage and Godman School has had a long, important history in service to African-American children. The institution first opened in 1867 to serve the African-American children who were orphaned by the Civil War. It operated under the auspices of the Mississippi Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. "The Orphans' Home" under the direction of Dr. W.D. Godman developed into an elite school for African-American children but began to struggle financially in 1921. Dr. Godman gathered together a choir and toured the northern states as the "Jubilee Singers." During this tour, Mrs. Addie Sager of Syracuse and Mrs. C.W.M. Brown of Elmira, New York, were impressed so much that they

together purchased the school for the predecessors to the United Methodist Women's Division. At the time the facility was known as the Sager-Brown Orphanage and Godman School. This school remained open until 1978.

In 1992, Hurricane Andrew swept across southern Louisiana causing widespread property damage, destroying homes, bringing countless lives to a standstill. Through UMCOR, The United Methodist Church began collecting funds and supplies for emergency relief.

Emergency shelters and centers were set up and construction materials started arriving. At that time the vacant Sager-Brown School was recognized as the perfect place at which to coordinate UMCOR's relief efforts. Since then several hundreds of volunteers have come each year to assist in the ongoing ministries of home repair and home construction. Other hurricanes caused damage around the country and the directors of UMCOR realized the need for a more permanent facility through which responses to national disasters could be coordinated. Early in 1996 a new 48,000 square foot warehouse was dedicated which now provides for the collection of relief supplies for prompt response to disasters across the nation and for worldwide relief efforts.



The North Shore District Ministry Team recently visited the UMCOR Sager-Brown Depot in Baldwin. Above: Levi Lewis, Lay Leader; Pam Guagliardo, Renewal Coordinator; Johnnie Mae Butler; Sarah Willis, District Missioner; Lee Chappel, Member-at-Large; Esther Chappel; Rev. Bill Sewell, Spiritual Coordinator; and Sager-Brown Director, Rev. Robert Townsend. Below: Members of the DMT help assemble health kits in the depot's warehouse.



Lee's Landing launches Kids Hope tutoring program

"The world needs vital churches that answer the call to make disciples. Small churches can be this type of church! Small churches are not "failed" large churches, nor are they mini "mega-churches". These churches are not locked into "numbers", but into a depth of caring that extends beyond membership into the community. Strong small churches build on their strengths.

"A vital task for small churches is to lean carefully into the grace of God and live in the vision of God's hope for the special place in which they are located!" (Excerpted from "Small Membership Congregations" by Julia Kuhn Wallace*)

Lee's Landing UMC in Ponchatoula, led by pastor Carol Richardson, wants to be this type of small church and to encourage other small churches to do the same! (Check out the website at <http://www.gbgm-umc.org/llumc>.) They have embarked on a variety of ministries, the latest being the support

of KIDS HOPE USA. Even though they are small, they have 9 tutors at Champ Cooper School. Melissa Guagliardo is the director of the program.

On Sunday Dec. 17, a Christmas party was given at Lee's Landing for the Kids Hope children, which involved the teachers and all of those in the church who have anything to do with KIDS HOPE USA. A fun time was had by all, and Santa even stopped in. The youth of the church helped Santa give out the gifts.

In the simplest terms, KIDS HOPE USA is:

One church. KIDS HOPE USA forms a bond between a church and its neighborhood by organizing, training, and encouraging its members to be mentors and prayer partners for at-risk elementary children from a nearby public elementary school. These volunteers are trained and nurtured to build one-to-one relationships which affirm the chil-

dren and help them master critical academic skills. Above all, church members let the students know that someone cares.

One child. Volunteers meet with one child – the same child – for a minimum of one school year. A caring adult becomes a consistent, positive presence in one special child's life.

One hour. Each tutoring session lasts about an hour. Academics are secondary. Simply being there is the key, sharing time and love, speaking volumes to a love-starved child.

*Julia Kuhn Wallace is Director, Small Membership Church and Shared Ministries, General Board of Discipleship.

She is available for seminars, workshops, consultations, and leader development:

P.O. Box 340003, Nashville, TN 37203-0003; tollfree (877) 899-2780, Ext. 7086; jwallace@gbod.org

Visit UMCOR Sager-Brown!

North Shore District UMW is planning a mission adventure/retreat to the depot May 4-5. Cost is \$26 and more information will be available through local UMW units and in the district newsletter.

Send your church's stories to the District Communication Advisor:

Sarah Willis
District Missioner
(504) 229-3921
twillis@I-55.com

Churches join in giving gifts, cheer to children of inmates

BY REV. BILL FOSTER
DISTRICT COMMUNICATION ADVISOR

Several Monroe District Churches joined this Christmas to share God's love through the Angel Tree Project. The Angel Tree Project is a part of Chuck Colson's Prison Fellowship Ministries; the program provides Christmas gifts for children of incarcerated inmates. This allows children to experience the love of God and their parents although their parent cannot be with them.

For the past few years St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Monroe has chosen to be a part of the Angel Tree Project.

This year for the party for the children to come and receive their gifts, the missions committee at St. Paul's decided to do something different. They wanted to reach out to more children, and as a result, Rev. Kevin D. Smith, associate pastor of St. Paul's UMC contacted Rev. Jack Holmes, senior pastor of Hope UMC to see about the possibility of hosting the party in the Hope UMC fellowship hall.

Rev. Holmes was thrilled and immediately committed to hosting the party as well as providing all of the decorations for the party.

The party took place on December 9 and the place was packed! There were many people from both St. Paul's UMC and Hope UMC to help with the festivities.

As a result, more families of those incarcerated participated in the party than ever before.

There was the typical United Methodist spread of food for all to enjoy along with face painting, a Christmas carol sing along, games, and an appearance from Santa Claus.

Some families in the outlying areas were unable to make it to the party, so First United Methodist Church, Bastrop and Rayville United Methodist Church graciously opened their churches to allow people to come and pick up their gifts.

Our United Methodist connectionalism was celebrated as we celebrated the birth of the Savior for all!



Children in the program wait to have their faces painted by Tricia Noland and Kathy Wells.



Above: Members of St. Paul's UMC and Hope UMC load gifts for the children. Right: Rev. Kevin D. Smith, associate pastor at St. Paul's reads 'A Special Place for Santa,' a book about the history of Santa Claus.



Vidalia UMC 'delivers' musical drama

Dec. 21-22 were the dates for the production "The Deliverer", an original musical drama presented by Vidalia United Methodist Church. Rev. Jonathan Beck, pastor, and Music Director Mary Kay Beck wove together drama, dance and music to depict the Biblical story from creation to redemption. Special attention was given to the details of the Advent/Christmas story, which also included a visit by the wise men. According to Rev. Beck, he and Mrs. Beck have been working on the program for several years and have expanded and rewritten it to its present format. "The format was original; the music was traditional", he said.

One of the most exciting aspects of the event was the participation by a number of churches from the Vidalia area. Brenda Huff, a member of Word of Faith Church in Natchez was instrumental in assisting with the choreography of the dance numbers. A number of persons from a local Baptist Church sang in the choir. Bobby Westmoreland from the Salvation Army portrayed Joseph and "Silent Thunder", the drama troupe from the Salvation Army School of the Arts, contributed much throughout the program. A highlight of the presentation was the visit by the 'Wise Men', portrayed by three teenaged boys from "Silent Thunder".

According to Rev. Beck, persons in the Vidalia community look forward to special presentations by the United Methodist church, which also coordinates an Easter presentation.

Church sponsors neighborhood watch

Memorial United Methodist Church in Monroe wanted to reach out to the community around them, and they wanted the neighborhood that surrounded the church to take notice of their surroundings and their neighbors.

After some discussion for several months they came to a conclusion that one way for the church to reach out would be through a neighborhood watch program.

"Our first meeting was in August. Since then it has been going real good," says co-president Vera Bullock. "They have shown a lot of interest in the neighborhood watch program." Bullock shares duties as president with Charlie Thompson from the neighboring Baptist church in the neighborhood. The Memorial UMC Neighborhood Watch has met on a regular monthly basis and has had such speakers as the Monroe

mayor and the chief of police come to share with them. Most recently they shared a covered dish supper in the church fellowship hall with people from the neighborhood. More people attended this gathering than any other previous meeting.

Pastor Rev. Jayne Trammell-Kelly hopes that this will be a way for the church to reach out and pull the community together.

Send your church's stories to the District Communication Advisor:

Rev. Bill Foster
3900 Loop Rd.
Monroe, LA 71201
(318) 325-7335

Global justice volunteers program offers opportunity for mission and adventure

Young adults looking for exciting life experiences should enroll in the Global Justice Volunteers Program.

Launched spring 1999 by the General Board of Global Ministries, the program places small groups of 18- to 25-year-olds in communities with justice-related projects. Participants experience different cultures and explore the link between faith and justice.

"Religion is what kept the people going," says Jimmie'n Jackson, who volunteered in Brazil. "It gave them hope to get up every morning to make that \$70 a month to put food on their table for five kids."

Applicants must be high school graduates with at least one year of work or college experience. They must commit to live and work in grassroots communities for two to six months and participate in all phases of the group volunteer experience. Volunteers are asked to contribute \$200 a month toward their expenses.

"Religion is what kept the people going. It gave them hope to get up every morning to make that \$70 a month to put food on their table for five kids."

The next term is May 14 through Aug. 17. The deadline for applying is Feb. 15. The fall term runs Sept. 10 through Dec. 14; June 1 is the fall application deadline.

For more information, contact Bud Heckman, Mission Volunteers, 475 Riverside Drive, Suite 330, New York, NY 10115; phone (212) 870-3825; or e-mail gjv@gbgm-umc.org; or visit the web site: www.gbgmumc.org/vim/features/globalj.htm.

Reprinted from Interpreter Magazine.



Applications are now being accepted for the Global Justice Volunteers Program, which places small groups of 18- to 25- year-olds in communities with justice-related projects. Pictured at bottom right is Louisiana Conference member Clifton Conrad Jr., who participated in the program in 1999.

Communications Fellowship

If you are a graduating United Methodist of ethnic minority heritage who is interested in pursuing a communications career, consider this opportunity.

Racial Ethnic Minority Fellowship

The Racial Ethnic Minority (REM) Fellowship is a one-year program of being mentored and gaining experience in religion communications.

Communications in a fellowship setting involves a variety of experiences, and could include newspaper writing and editing, public relations, video production, TV/radio spot placement, electronic publishing, and program development.

United Methodist Communications, an agency of the United Methodist Church, offers the REM Fellowship to one recent or spring college graduate each year. The selected individual will work with an experienced United Methodist communicator, August 1, 2001-July 31, 2002.

The exact location of the 2001-2002 fellowship experience is yet to be determined. Salary for the one-year term is \$30,000 plus benefits, moving expenses, and travel.

The Fellowship is ideal for a United Methodist of racial ethnic background who is interested in considering religion communications as a career. The fellowship will require the recipient to relocate to the selected area within the United States.

**Application Deadline:
March 13, 2001**

<http://crt.umc.org/rem>



UMC
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communications

**For More
Information
and To Apply**

Application forms are available from

REM Fellowship Committee
c/o UMC
Conference Resourcing Team
P.O. Box 320
Nashville, TN 37202

1-888-278-4862

e-mail REM@umc.org
or online at <http://crt.umc.org/rem>

Retreat offers refreshment to those under appointment

BY REV. JUDITH SHEMA

"Soon and very soon..." go the words of Andrae Couch's song of meeting with the King. Indeed, soon and very soon, all persons under appointment in the Louisiana Annual Conference will be fed and refreshed through fellowship and tending our souls under the guidance of Rev. Grace Imathiu. As part of sharing our faith journeys together, retreat participants are encouraged to bring with them symbols of their walk with Christ. Perhaps you hold an ancient hymnbook passed down through your family or maybe you have a license to preach from an ancestor who helped shape your vocation. Some may have a rock picked up at church camp when they were called to the ministry. Others may treasure their first born child's baby blanket. Please bring any object that symbolizes any part of your faith journey to the retreat with you. These objects will be displayed and used to construct an altar for our worship services during the retreat. Enter into the spirit of renewal by sharing with your fellow travelers these symbols of your faith.

Please register directly with the Louisiana Conference Center in Woodworth, (318) 449-4500. Deadline is Feb. 1. Full payment of \$140 is expected with your registration and this covers lodging and all meals during the retreat.

Let's admit it, we are a very independent group of church leaders. It's hard to submit to "strong urging to participate"! Perhaps there is assurance in the responses of many who resisted attendance at the last retreat. They expressed frank surprise that the retreat turned out to be so meaningful. Here's to another surprise...

Churches aid Ala. tornado recovery

UMNS - United Methodists across Alabama are assisting in cleanup efforts after deadly tornados ripped through the state Dec. 16.

The hardest hit area was the city of Tuscaloosa, in the western part of the state, where 11 people were killed, about 100 injured and nearly 400 homes destroyed. Ten of the fatalities occurred at Bear Creek trailer park. A woman who recently had been attending Tuscaloosa First United Methodist Church died in the storm.

Later that afternoon, the same tornado touched down in east Alabama, resulting in injuries and destruction in Etowah County.

A tornado also ripped through the city of Geneva in southeast Alabama, claiming one life and moving on to cause damage in four counties.

The Alabama-West Florida Conference already has received an initial grant of \$10,000 from the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) for its work.

IN BRIEF

Reports from United Methodist News Service

Clergyman to continue School of the Americas protest

MINNEAPOLIS — Fresh from three months in prison, the Rev. Charles Butler says he will participate in a School of the Americas Watch protest at Fort Benning, Ga., next November, but will not trespass on government property again. The 73-year-old retired United Methodist pastor does not want to back to jail. "It would be for six months if I am convicted again," he said. "I do plan to go back, but I want to discover a new way to protest." Butler said he also plans to attend protest activities March 29-April 3 in Washington.

He was one of nine defendants found guilty March 10 of violating a ban barring protestors from entering the School of the Americas property. The nine had been among 12,000 protesters who gathered at the gates of Fort Benning in November 1999 to call for the school's closing.

The 53-year-old school - which trains 900 to 2,000 soldiers annually - has been under fire for its connection with human rights abuses allegedly perpetrated by its graduates. Butler was sentenced in June to three months in prison and a \$2,500 fine. He entered the low-medium security federal prison in Waseca, Minn., Sept. 24, and was released the day after Thanksgiving.

'Lost Boys of Sudan' need resettlement sponsors

NEWYORK — United Methodist church sponsors are needed for a group known as the "Lost Boys of Sudan" as the refugees are resettled in nine parts of the United States early next year. The boys and young men, ranging in age from under 18 to 25, are living in a refugee camp in Kenya, according to Lilia Fernandez, executive secretary for refugee ministries, United Methodist Committee on Relief.

About 20,000 Dinka and Nuer boys—most of them orphans—left war-torn Sudan in the 1980s. Since leaving, they have been shuttled among several refugee camps. The U.S. government has agreed to resettle about 3,000 of the refugees and has allotted 300 of them to Church World Service, the relief arm of the National Council of Churches.

The refugees, who may begin arriving as early as February, will be resettled in areas where CWS affiliates can provide special services. Those areas are: Atlanta; Dallas/Fort Worth; Denver; Lincoln/Omaha, Neb.; Louisville, Ky.; New Haven, Conn.; Phoenix; Richmond/Virginia Beach, Va.; and Lancaster, Pa. United Methodists and members of other denominations are needed as sponsors. Fernandez said that a number of congregations could work together in sponsorship. More information is available by calling Fernandez in New York at (212) 870-3805 or Susan Wersan, UMCOR program coordinator for refugee ministries, at (212) 870-3807. Fernandez may also be contacted by e-mail: liliaf@gbgm-umc.org.

United Methodist board commissions 36 missionaries

ATLANTA — A diverse group of 36 missionaries are being assigned internationally by the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries after being commissioned Dec. 10 in Atlanta. Hailing from six continents, the missionaries are members of the United Methodist Church, United Church of Christ, Presbyterian Church USA and autonomous Methodist Churches in Ireland and South Korea.



A UMNS photo courtesy of the Cory family.

COMPUTERIZED MINISTRY — Catherine Cory (right) plays with her son Alex in this undated family photograph. She died recently after contracting AIDS from a blood transfusion during Alex's birth. Alex, who was breast-fed, is also infected with the virus. The family has found support from the Computerized AIDS Ministries network of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries.

WORLD WATCH

UMNS — In the aftermath of an eye-opening trip to the Middle East, United Methodist Bishop William Oden hopes that more can be done to raise the consciousness of local congregations about that region's people and problems.

As president of the denomination's Council of Bishops, Oden was part of a high-level delegation of American church leaders visiting Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Gaza and the West Bank during the Dec. 7-12 trip. The purpose of the visit was to express solidarity with Christian churches there and join those calling for renewed efforts to a peaceful solution to the Israeli/Palestinian crisis.



On Dec. 20, Israeli and Palestinian negotiators met with President Clinton at the White House in an attempt to reach a settlement before Clinton leaves office in January.

For Oden, who had last been in Jerusalem for a Methodist-Anglican dialogue meeting eight years ago, the trip "was a life-changing experience."

"It's one thing to read news reports in the United States," the bishop told United Methodist News Service. "It's another thing to be with families whose homes have been destroyed, parents whose children have been killed or maimed and to visit with Palestinians and Israelis and to see the fear in their eyes."

The "pressure cooker" situation was evident, he said, while visiting such places as Jaballa refugee camp in Gaza, where 93,000 Palestinians are crammed into a one-square mile space, and witnessing "how the Palestinian villages are being strangled," with access to food, medical supplies and jobs being cut off.

"I had the same feeling as we went through the West Bank and Gaza as I had when I visited the townships around Johannesburg, (South Africa)," he added.

Other perspectives of the situation came to the delegation through conversations with Israeli political and religious leaders. "We came back convinced there can be no Palestinian freedom without Israeli security and there can be no Israeli security without Palestinian freedom," Oden said.

For Oden, the most memorable part of the visit came on Dec. 10, when the Christian and Muslim communities in Bethlehem planned a joint candlelight procession into Manger Square. The delegation, which had found the square deserted two days earlier, joined a swelling crowd of more than 1,000 persons. "We all together processed into Manger Square for prayers and carols," he recalled.

One of the immediate changes that Oden hopes will occur in the region is the renewal of tourism, which basically stopped this fall because of violence and security issues. He believes both Israelis and Palestinians will work to assure the safety of tour groups and encourages United Methodists participating in Holy Land tours to make an effort to connect with both peoples.

Oden also would like to strengthen denominational ties to the Middle East. He praised the work of the Rev. Sandra Olewine, a United Methodist Board of Global Ministries missionary working with both Catholic Relief Services and a Lutheran congregation in Jerusalem.

Louisiana Conference *NOW!*

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Rena Yocom Executive Director,
Conference Mission and Ministries
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Wendy Jones Subscriptions

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—New Address—

On the Web

You can find the Louisiana Annual
Conference on the Internet at
<http://www.la-umc.org>

Church honors member for longtime nursing home ministry

Thelma Rowe's heart for elderly people began when she was a young child. She has had a passion and love for them for as long as she can remember. Like her mother before her, Thelma expresses that love in tangible ways.

"For the 15 years that I have been helping Thelma with the Sing-N-Sew Ministry at Ingleside United Methodist Church, I have come to the Fellowship Hall about 9:00am to find it all ready for our participants-crafts and all out on the tables, snacks and coffee in the kitchen. Having been there since 7:30am," said Rosemary Campbell. "She has attended weddings at the nursing homes, helped with burial expenses and clothes. She has always been there with a hug or cheerful word."

Very few days go by that Thelma isn't visiting one of the nursing homes, taking an article of clothing, or perhaps following up to make certain that proper attention is being given and care provided. "She looks after them as carefully as if they were her own family. This is a genuine expression of her heart and an inspiration to all of us!" said Rev. Joe Donakey, pastor at Ingleside.

Thelma has been the heartbeat of the Sing-N-Sew Ministry for over 30 years. For many of the participants this is the only outing they have and the single chance to be in fellowship with others.

They so look forward to being together and enjoying the variety of activities including singing, dancing, games, devotions, crafts and refreshments. On Holidays and special days a meal is prepared and served. This is a ministry to people who otherwise might be forgotten and alone.

Dec. 31 was "Thelma Rowe Sunday" at Ingleside United Methodist Church. Several participants of the Sing-N-Sew Ministry, volunteers and members of Rowe's family were present and attended a reception in her honor following church. Monies are being collected to purchase something for the church in her honor.

As Thelma Rowe releases her all-volunteer responsibilities, it will be a challenge to continue this ministry. Funding to sustain the ministry has always come from donations, garage sales and estate sales.

"We are looking into grants and other alternative sources of funding. Donations can be sent to Ingleside United Methodist Church. Everyone agrees that there is a tremendous need for a handicap-equipped van to transport those who attend," Donakey observed.

"I am most impressed by the way that Thelma cares for each one of the participants. I have often wondered if I could



Ingleside UMC in Baton Rouge recently honored member Thelma Rowe's work with the elderly by declaring Dec. 31 "Thelma Rowe Sunday."

do some of the things she does so well," reflected Lois Taylor, a longtime volunteer and one of the members of Ingleside who is stepping forward to provide the leadership necessary to keep this ministry going.

"God has provided for this program

over the years. This is the Lord's work and somehow it has always worked out," Thelma Rowe reminded those who have worked with her. Ingleside moves forward in the faith that God will continue to provide a way to reach out in the name of Christ, with Love!

Restorative Justice, *from page 1*

offender. Answers to questions can be received and an opportunity to tell their story is available, with the possibility of seeing remorse in the offender. They can receive a sense of closure and a feeling of power over the situation, with an opportunity for restitution for damages and losses and a change of attitude and perception.

Mediation benefits the offender with an opportunity to take responsibility for his actions and see the human costs of the crime. One is able to put a face to the crime that has been committed.

Fear of retaliation is relieved and the possibility is given to have a say in making things right and expressing repentance. There is a greater sense of closure.

The community can benefit with a greater sense of connectedness as people participate as mediators or participants with an opportunity to solve problems as a community, not just as the state. As a result, there is a decreased fear of crime.

A state Victim/Offender Mediation group is being formed in January and mediation training sessions will be conducted very soon. This is a wonderful way for local churches to really make a difference in the lives of thousands of people broken by crime.

For more information, contact John R. Johns, 1214 N. Second St., Jena, LA 71342, (318) 992-7347 or by e-mail at johns@centurytel.net.

CONFERENCE CALENDAR

JANUARY

12-14	Happening	La. Conference Center
14	Special Offering for Human Relations Day	
17-18	Conference Cabinet Meeting	Headquarters Bldg.
19-20	License to Preach School	TBA
19-20	Conference Council on Youth Ministries	Henning UMC, Sulphur
19-21	South Central Jurisdiction Joint Training Event	Harvey Hotel, DFW Airport, Irving, Texas
19-21	Academy for Spiritual Leadership - Track III	La. Conference Center
21	United Methodist Women's Sunday	
22-23	Senior Clergy Think Tank	La. Conference Center
23	Conference Nominating Committee	Headquarters Bldg.
24-31	United Methodist Camp/Retreat Ministry	Snow Mountain Ranch, Colorado.
	Certification Course: "Faith Formation and Christian Living"	
25-28	Cursillo #82	La. Conference Center
26-27	Strategic Planning Seminar: Tri-District Training for North Shore, New Orleans, and Baton Rouge Districts	Jan. 26: First UMC, Hammond (pastors only)
		Jan. 27: SLU (all)

TAKING IT TO THE STREETS

NEW ORLEANS 2001

MARCH 23, 24, 25, 2001

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL

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BATON ROUGE, LA

January 26, 2001

Apportionment payments reach all-time high

Apportionment payments for 2000 have reached a new high of nearly 95 percent for the Louisiana Conference, said Executive Director of Administrative Services Rev. Carl Rhoads.

"This represents an additional \$100,000 for the mission and ministry of the Louisiana Conference," Rhoads said.

"The percentage of 94.96 represents a

.42 percent increase above last year's previous record high," he said.

"How exciting it is to see that kind of fulfillment of commitment on the part of the churches of Louisiana. You are to be commended!" said Bishop William W. Hutchinson.

For the rest of the bishop's comments, see his column "On the Journey" on

page 2.

In addition to apportionments, the Conference has also raised \$630,000 in "second-mile giving" for additional ministries.

A full list of churches who contributed 100 percent of apportionments, as well as those who contributed "100-plus," may be found on pages 3 and 6-7.

Announcing
Annual Conference
This year's theme:

*Alive in the Spirit-
Walking in the Way*

June 3-6, 2001
Centenary College
Shreveport

INSIDE

Conference appoints
new district missionary
coordinator /8

Conference Calendar /8



Bernice UMC rebuilds
after fire /5

- ☐ Shreveport
District /4
- ☐ Ruston
District /5



Continuing the Mission

Youth collect money to aid
delivery of twins in Mexico

BY BETTY BACKSTROM
EDITOR

When Diane Howe led a youth work mission to Rio Bravo, Mexico last summer, she didn't realize that a lifesaving effort would emerge for the young people traveling and serving with her.

"I had taken the youth from my church to our United Methodist site in Juarez the prior summer, and looked forward to another rewarding experiencing with youth. There were three adults and 18 youth from various churches in the Louisiana conference. We all enthusiastically loaded into two vans on July 29. I've worked with youth for over 20 years, and have never seen a group come together spiritually, emotionally or communally as quickly as this group," said Howe, who serves as youth director for University UMC in Lake Charles.

Once in Rio Bravo, the Volunteers in Mission group divided into two teams to work on two homes for a large, extended family. Each struc-

see RIO BRAVO, page 8

Woodrow Jacocks of First United Methodist Church in Gonzales and Trisha McCaulley of University UMC in Lake Charles enjoy fellowship with a young resident of Rio Bravo.



Special offering slated for La. Prison Chapel Foundation

Baran Kaylo, warden for the Avoyelles Correctional Center in Cottonport, looks forward to the completion of the prison's new chapel. A member of Marksville United Methodist Church, and a United Methodist for 51 years, Kaylo said, "I believe that the chapel will act as a beacon, drawing those with little hope and great despair to hear our message of salvation."

A conference-wide special offering

will be held Sunday, Feb. 4 to benefit the Louisiana Prison Chapel Foundation.

"Worship and religious ministries in prison have a profoundly positive impact on the stability of a prison, and provide an alternative to gangs and other undesirable activities. When prison lives are permanently changed, they become far more productive citizens when released back into society," Kaylo added.

The warden pointed out that studies show that only 14% of participants in organized Bible studies returned to prison in contrast to a recidivism rate of more than 40% for nonparticipants.

Ground has been broken for two other chapels at C. Paul Phelps Correctional Center in DeQuincy and Elayn Hunt Correctional Center in St. Gabriel. These first three chapels will cost approximately \$995,000.

ON THE JOURNEY

You Are to Be Commended

We've been running the "Apportionment Marathon" the last few days. Carl Rhoads and I have kept the phone line between our offices hot with the daily news (sometimes hourly!) of payouts and promised payouts. It's been like the election reports without the media to fuel the fire. There's been fuel enough in the day-to-day countdown.

The word is that we as a Conference have paid 94.96% of all askings for a total of \$6,330,227 in the year 2000! That compares to 94.54% and a total of \$6,227,683 for 1999. CONGRATULATIONS TO YOU FOR AN EXCELLENT FINISH! How exciting it is to see that kind of fulfillment of commitment on the part of the churches of Louisiana. You are to be commended!

Apportionments are an interesting hallmark of The United Methodist Church. They are a common linkage all of us share and a common denominator around which church budgets are built.

What one of our churches does or does not do in their faithful payment of these mission objectives has significant effect on the other churches and the lives of people who are dependent on the funds promised to fulfill their mission or to put food in their mouths. While we have heard them referred to as "taxation without representation," apportionments are actually the product of a very democratic/representative system that votes them into existence in response to the multitude of requests for funding support around the world.

How we respond to those mission items has much to say about how important we see our ministry to others as well as to ourselves.

I've experienced most of the gamut of responses to the apportionments in my life as a pastor. In some churches the commitment to paying-in-full was as carved in stone as the payment of the pastor's salary.

In fact, the pastor's salary in every church I served was determined by the percentage payout of the apportionments. Only if apportionments were paid in full could a salary increase be considered.

In one church the administrative board had voted to withhold apportionment money "to make a statement." This had happened before I arrived as pastor.

The bishop said to me in appointing me there, "One of your assignments is to get the apportionments paid in full." That first year we were unable to fulfill that assignment, but we came very close. With a great deal of education, patience, answering of questions, and explaining the importance of these funds, the next year the church rescinded their vote to withhold the money and paid in full. That continued, and continues, to be their pattern.



Bishop William W. Hutchinson

In another church I inherited unbelievable financial disarray. By the end of that first partial year we were some \$55,000 short on our apportioned funds. The only way to pay would have necessitated our borrowing money to do so. In conversation with the bishop we agreed that to plunge the church further into debt by borrowing would prevent the church from recovering from their financial crisis. It was agreed that we would not pay that year with the promise that the items would be paid in full the next year.

With that bit of grace the church recovered from their crisis and with great effort and much commitment were able to meet their obligations 100% from that point forward. It became a source of pride to that flagship church to lead the annual conference once again both by example and in actual dollars raised for the apportionments.

I know it gets more difficult annually for some of our churches to raise these important funds. I affirm and commend those of you who have been able to complete your budget year with a 100% payment of apportioned items! Every ministry and person that is dependent on these gifts for their existence also thanks you!

I also affirm those of you who have tried hard but just couldn't quite make it. Thank you for your concerted and sincere effort. I pray that for 2001 you will be able to complete your task and bring joy to your hearts for having done so.

For those who simply do not see the apportioned items as necessary or desirable, or who want to "make a statement" by the withholding of monies, I ask you to reconsider that stance.

I encourage you to allow your District Superintendent and me to come and sit with you for a discussion of the importance of this lifeline of The United Methodist Church. I believe we can help you and your entire church have a different vision of this whole area.

I pray for the day when Louisiana will join other United Methodist conferences in paying 100% of all apportioned items.

I believe it can be done. We're just percentages away! Thanks for getting us so-o-o-o close this year!

It's all part of the journey...

Bill Hutchinson

Scholarship applications available from Higher Education Foundation

Nominations are now being accepted for the United Methodist Higher Education Foundation Annual Conference Scholarship. One \$1,000 scholarship will be awarded to a United Methodist student nominated by each of the 65 Annual Conference Boards of Higher Education and Campus Ministry for the 2001/2002 academic year. An award certificate will be presented to the recipient at the Annual Conference meeting.

Applications and nominations from the Conference Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry or designated entity will be accepted for candidates who have been an active member of The United Methodist Church for at least one year, and will be either an entering freshman at a United Methodist-related school, college, or university or be a first-year seminary student at a United Methodist-related theological school. Applicants must be a United States citizen or a permanent resident. Students may not be re-nominated for this award.

Applications and additional information may be obtained from the Conference Office. Applications must be completed and returned to the Conference Office by April 15.

UMCOR responds to El Salvador crisis

The United Methodist Committee on Relief is responding to the earthquake in El Salvador through the Methodist Church in El Salvador and Action by Churches Together, the relief and development arm of the World Council of Churches.

A staff member of the General Board of Global Ministries was in El Salvador when the earthquake struck and has been able to facilitate conversations between UMCOR staff and the president

of the Methodist Church in El Salvador. Though small, the local church has effectively organized for disaster response in San Salvador and Ahuachapan, and church members are addressing the basic needs of people who have been displaced by the earthquake.

Louisiana Conference Volunteers in Mission played a significant role in building Methodist churches in Ahuachapan, said VIM Director Larry Norman.

Important IRS Notice for Pastors and Treasurers

Effective Jan. 1, 2001, the mileage rate for travel was increased by the Internal Revenue Service to 34.5 cents per mile.

Notification of Retirement

Paragraph 356 of the 2000 Book of Discipline states that "requests for retirement shall be stated in writing to the bishop, cabinet, and board of ordained ministry at least one hundred twenty days prior to the date on which retirement is to be effective." If you plan to retire at the next session of Annual Conference, notification should be received by those listed above by Feb. 1, 2001. The processing of a clergy's retirement may be delayed if this time frame is not met.

STAINED GLASS



HAWKTOONS. ANTHILL.COM

Churches urged to take advantage grants for media campaign

Louisiana Conference churches will have the opportunity to be a part of Igniting Ministry, a national television advertising campaign for The United Methodist Church, as requests for a second series of matching grants are received by United Methodist Communications. Up to \$50,000 is available to the conference in a single grant application.

Two churches in this conference, Broadmoor United Methodist in Shreveport and Rayne Memorial United Methodist in New Orleans, were awarded grants in the initial series of applica-



tions. The first run of nationally produced commercials is set for the Lenten season of 2001. The second series of grant funding will underwrite a television campaign slated during "Back-to-School."

"As the new year begins, there is excitement in United Methodism about

the opportunities we have to share the Good News of God's love. Igniting Ministry is going to help people know and love and participate in our great United

Methodist Church," said Rev. Chris Andrews, chair of the Igniting Ministry Task Force. The task force includes the members of the Communications Committee, newly appointed by the Conference Ministry Team.

The committee is comprised of representatives from various streams of com-

munication, including television, radio, newspaper, cable and the Internet. They are charged with the oversight of our participation in and training for the Igniting Ministry project.

Members of the Communication Committee will meet with the District Ministry Teams at training on Feb. 3 at First UMC in Pineville. Igniting Ministry packets will be utilized to inform and train district communication advisors in developing congregational support and participation in this unique project.

Application deadline for the second round of grants is May 1.

LOUISIANA CONFERENCE 2000 STEWARDSHIP REPORT

DISTRICT	CHURCH APPORTIONMENT	PAID ALL FUNDS	%PAID APPORTIONMENTS
RUSTON	559,045.00	606,508.90	99.27
NORTH SHORE	639,423.00	695,457.81	98.86
SHREVEPORT	1,214,202.00	1,339,704.65	97.65
ALEXANDRIA	481,800.00	496,876.82	97.52
LAKE CHARLES	666,266.00	709,675.85	96.88
ACADIANA	532,020.00	535,090.91	95.32
MONROE	650,168.00	689,135.93	94.63
BATON ROUGE	1,051,721.00	1,088,071.21	94.34
NEW ORLEANS	869,789.00	809,506.16	83.64
LA CONFERENCE	6,666,102.00	6,970,183.16	94.96

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 Rena Yocom Executive Director,
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A Portion Meant for Others

Special Recognition "100-plus": The following churches have paid 100 percent or more on all apportionments plus payments on General Advance Specials, Conference Advance Specials and Church Offerings.

ACADIANA

FIRST UMC/ NEW IBERIA,
 REV MICHAEL MCLAURIN
 FIRST UMC/ THIBODAUX, REV WYBRA J PRICE, II

ALEXANDRIA

FIRST UMC/ BOYCE, REV WILLIAM K MCDONALD
 FIRST UMC/ PINEVILLE, REV J RODDY TAYLOR
 WILTON UMC, REV MICHAEL CAFFERY
 EMMANUEL UMC, REV JAMES A GRAHAM

BATON ROUGE

FIRST UMC/ BATON ROUGE,
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 JEFFERSON UMC, REV CAROL S WINN
 BLUFF CREEK UMC, REV L DARWIN BRECHEEN
 MEADOWS CHAPEL UMC,
 REV ANGUS L CARRUTH
 ZACHARY UMC, REV ALAN EINSEL
 LUTCHER UMC, REV WILLIAM V TURNER
 BEECH GROVE UMC, REV WILLIE LAWS
 ST LANDRY UMC / GONZALES,
 REV GREGORY MCCLAY, SR
 CAMPHOR MEMORIAL UMC,
 REV ROGER D LATHAN
 LUTCHER CHAPEL UMC,
 REV GREGORY MCCLAY, SR

LAKE CHARLES

ROANOKE UMC, REV SUSAN C PUGH
 HOLLY GROVE UMC,
 REV G LARRY MAXWELL, SR
 FIRST UMC/ LK CHAS,
 REV DOUGLAS DEGRAFFENRIED
 OAK PARK UMC, REV TOMMY R BERGERON, SR
 ST LUKE-SIMPSON UMC,
 REV JAMES HUMPHREYS
 UNIVERSITY UMC/ LK CHAS,
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 REV G LARRY MAXWELL, SR
 HENNING MEM UMC,
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 WESLEY UMC/ SULPHUR, REV LEON A BOGGS
 MALLALIEU UMC / JENNINGS,
 REV MARVETTE J THOMAS
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FIRST UMC/ MONROE, REV LARRY R STAFFORD
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 ST. LUKE'S UMC, REV WESLEY C REAGAN
 SHAW TEMPLE UMC, REV DALE E BRANCH
 BETHANY UMC/ NEW ORLEANS,
 REV HADLEY R EDWARDS

NORTH SHORE

ELIZABETH SULLIVAN MEM UMC,
 REV HULEN C WARREN, JR
 FIRST UMC/ DENHAM SPRINGS,
 REV KIRBY VINING
 LEE'S LANDING UMC, REV CAROL RICHARDSON
 BUSH UMC, REV KARL D WOOD
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 REV M EUGENE FINNELL
 HARTZELL MT ZION UMC,
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MT MARIAH UMC, DR A WAYNE EVANS
 ARCADIA UMC, DR A WAYNE EVANS
 WESLEY CHAPEL UMC, REV BYRD L TERRY
 FARMERVILLE UMC, REV JOHN G HANKINS
 OAK GROVE UMC, REV JOHNIE W ADKINS, JR
 TRINITY UMC/ RUSTON,
 REV FRED B WIDEMAN

SHREVEPORT

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 BETHANY UMC, REV WALTER L PARR, JR
 BETHEL UMC, REVS CHAS/FRANCES FREEMAN
 FIRST UMC/ BOSSIER CITY, REV LARRY G MILLER
 ASBURY UMC, REV JERRY G HILBUN
 CROSSROADS UMC, REV JAMES R HUBER
 WESLEY CHAPEL UMC, REV RICHARD M BOYETT
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 CHRIST UMC, REV LARRY D O'DELL
 FAITH UMC, REV WILLIE E JACKSON, JR
 FAIRFIELD UMC, REV WILLIE E JACKSON, JR
 FIRST UMC/ SHREVEPORT, DR R PAT DAY
 MANGUM UMC, REV GREGORY R DAVIS
 MORNINGSIDE UMC, REV RICHARD L COCKBURN
 NOEL MEMORIAL UMC,
 REV STEVEN W CARAWAY
 LAKEVIEW UMC, REV CHARLES B HUMPHREYS
 TRINITY UMC/ SHREVEPORT,
 REV JUDITH D BAZER
 ZWOLLE UMC, REV BONITA DAVIS
 NOBLE UMC, REV BONITA DAVIS
 VIVIAN UMC, REV RAMONALYNN BETHLEY
 MCDONALD UMC, REV DONNY R NEDD
 WESLEY UMC/ MANSFIELD,
 REV S CHARLES BYRD
 FAIRVIEW UMC, REV OSCAR E PLAYER

Youth leadership retreat set

The Cross Bayou Walk to Emmaus Community is proud to announce that it will begin a Chrysalis community this summer. Chrysalis is the youth version of Walk to Emmaus and it is open to any upper high school student (15-18) who wishes to learn more about their faith. The three-day weekend is designed to help those who already demonstrate faith and leadership qualities to strengthen their walk with God. The first weekend will be a girls retreat and will be held on August 10-12. If you are interested in exploring the possibility of participating



in this retreat experience, or if you have been a part of Chrysalis or Emmaus and would be interested in serving on the team, please contact Renee Hall at 318-965-4444 (weskiat@aol.com) or Rev. Quinn O'Bannon at 318-861-0586 (quinn@broadmoorumc.org).

British minister to speak at Broadmoor UMC

Dr. Reginald Mallett will be the Lenten guest speaker at Broadmoor UMC, Shreveport. He will kick off the church's Lenten Luncheon Series at noon, March 7, and will speak at Sunday services March 4, and at 6:30 p.m. March 5-6.

Mallett is an ordained Methodist Minister of the British conference and a physician. He studied Theology at the University of London and has served as

pastor of some of the largest churches in England. Now he travels, preaching every weekend in various parts of Great Britain. He is the author of "God's Coming in Christ," "Journeying with Jesus," and "The Cradle and the Star."

For more information call Broadmoor United Methodist Church (318) 861-0586 or visit our web site: www.broadmoorumc.org.

Homecoming

Two hundred people turned out for Homecoming 2000 at Lakeview UMC to enjoy worship, music and a meal with four former pastors. At right, current pastor Rev. Charles Humphreys visits with John and Carol Martin.



Vivian UMC reaches out



Members of the 'Reach Out and Touch' ministry at Vivian UMC prepare food to nourish body and soul. From left: Becky Hall, Donna Price, Eugenia Miles, Angie Byerley, Betty Flanagan, and Maxine Smith.

The ministry of "Reach Out and Touch" is doing just that at Vivian UMC. This cooking ministry got its start last October in the kitchen of the church when one member suggested the idea as one way to reach out to homebound members, and it took off from there.

"What Methodist church doesn't have a few good cooks?" asked pastor Rev. Ramonalynn Bethley. "And we are no exception!"

Once a month, four cooks gather in

the kitchen of the church to make final preparations and serve up a meal ready for delivery to 40 members and friends who live in the surrounding area.

When the meals are all boxed up, the delivery teams pick them up and head off in all different directions in Vivian and surrounding towns. The cooks agree that it is more than filling stomachs, but feeding souls by reaching out and touching others with the love of Christ.

North Highlands youth minister to special needs in church, community

The Magnificent Mission Kids at North Highlands United Methodist Church in Shreveport have been very active by putting missions into action. The MMKs is an outreach of the Mission Committee and the coordinator of this group of elementary-age boys and girls is Elaine Sanders.

At each weekly meeting, they write cards to our sick, shut-ins, and those who have lost a loved one. Throughout the past couple of years they have baked dozens and dozens of cookies and made cards for children and for the Kairos Prison Ministry at both Wade and Winn correctional facilities. They bake Valentine cookies and deliver them to veterans at the VA hospital and make and deliver fruit baskets to our shut-ins. The ladies in the church were surprised with a handmade May basket full of special treats. As an ongoing project, they have been collecting pennies for their "Mile of Pennies." Their goal is to collect \$843 for children and are over halfway there. The pennies collected will go to a special conference offering for children.

They have also been learning about apportionments and how our money is used. For four Sundays, the kids talked to the congregation and raised awareness of the many areas in the state, nation and world where our money is used in support of children and youth.

As a way of making their project more interesting, they sponsored a "Kiss The Pig" contest. The kids personally asked five leaders in the church to be in the contest and the one to get the most votes was the winner! When all the votes were counted, we had a tie! The winners were David Hobson, music director and Rev. Sandi Huber, pastor. The kids raised \$332.75!



Announcements

Christ United Methodist Church in Shreveport is seeking a full-time **Director of Christian Education**. A college degree in Christian education or another church-related field is preferred. Salary and benefits \$28,000-32,000. Send resume to 1204 Crabapple Dr., Shreveport, LA 71118; telephone 318-686-2553; fax: 318-686-2578.

Christ United Methodist Church in Shreveport will be taking a leadership team to Frazer Memorial United Methodist Church in February to attend Frazer's **"Every Member in Ministry Conference."** The dates are Feb. 23-25. There are some seats available on the bus they will be taking. The cost will be \$50 per person. If you are interested in traveling with the group from Christ UMC call (318) 686-2553.

Send your church's stories to the District Communication Advisor:

Mary Jarvis
3715 Youree Dr.
Shreveport, LA 71105
(318) 861-0586
maryj@broadmoorumc.org



Contemporary worship arrives at Arcadia UMC

Arcadia's first ever contemporary Christian worship service was held Sunday, Dec. 3. Despite a power outage affecting many homes, 80 persons gathered in the fellowship hall of First United Methodist Church, Arcadia, as New Way Worship held its premiere service.

The church's Contemporary Worship Committee Chair, Dan Madden, welcomed everyone. Praise and Worship Leader, Mick Dvorak, and his band of keyboard, drums, acoustic guitar, and bass led the congregation in a medley of favorite carols and praise hymns.

Like churches in larger metropolitan areas, contemporary worship has come to Bienville Parish. There were no traditional bulletins nor hymnals. Instead, all the words were projected by laptop computer onto a large screen. The service included a brief clip from the movie *Silverado*, emphasizing the scripture of the day: *John 4*, the

Just as the leaders of the Reformation in the 1500s used the newest technology (the printing press) to spread the Gospel, so now the church should use the newest technology to share the Grace of God.

thirst all people have for a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Pastor Wayne Evans used the Power Point presentation with computer and projector to flash scriptures, pictures, and key applications of the Bible teaching to the congregation. Marietta Campbell prepared the altar table with a fountain focusing on Jesus as the water of life. She had worked with the children of First UMC weeks earlier to prepare two large banners incorporating silhouettes of their hands used in praising God.

Why have they gone to all this trouble to offer another worship service even though there is still room at the 11:00 a.m. traditional service? Those who are under 40 grew up with electronic media. They are used to watching TV rather than reading a book. During the week they listen to music created by guitars and drums, rather than an organ. Just as the leaders of the Reformation in the 1500s used the newest technology (the printing press) to spread the Gospel, so now the church should use the newest technology to share the Grace of God.

New Way Worship meets at 10 a.m. each Sunday morning in the fellowship hall of First UMC, one block west of the Arcadia Water Tower. All are invited.



Out of the Ashes

Rev. Billy Minyard speaks to members and guests of the congregation of Bernice United Methodist Church attending a groundbreaking ceremony in December at the site where a new church building will be constructed. Bernice UMC lost its church building last year in a fire which totally destroyed it.



The Lord's Supper

Rev. Charles Penuell, left, pastor at Athens UMC welcomes district clergy and spouses at the annual District Christmas Party which was held in the brand new fellowship hall at Athens United Methodist Church. Both men and women of the church volunteered to do all the cooking, serving and cleaning involved with the meal. District Superintendent Rev. Jimmie Pyles reported that the meal was excellent and the fellowship was delightful.



Church members journey to Mexico for mission

A group from First Wesley Chapel Churches of Homer teamed up with a group from Lea Joyner Memorial UMC of Monroe on a work-mission trip to Mexico this past October. The group built two cinderblock houses for the working poor of Juarez. It was a marvelous trip filled with hard work, cross-cultural experiences, and many blessings.

Many groups are going from Louisiana into Mexico for work missions, medical missions, and evangelistic work. If you are interested in growing spiritually and being a blessing to others through short-term mission trips, contact Larry Norman, Volunteers in Missions Coordinator for the Louisiana Annual Conference: (888) 239-5286.

Send your church's stories to the District Communication Advisor:

Carol Stewart
2013 Hwy. 794
Gibbsland, LA 71028
(318) 254-8200
(318) 843-6329

A Portion Meant for Others

Churches that paid 100 percent of apportionments

ACADIANA

ABBEVILLE UMC, REV JOHN L VINING
PECAN ISLAND UMC, REV JOHN L VINING
BAYOU BLUE UMC, REV CURTISS D EDEN
ASBURY UMC/ FRANKLIN, REV DARRYL BRIGGS
TRINITY UMC, REV BARRY WHITTINGTON
FIRST UMC/ FRANKLIN, DR BURTON F BLAIR
MCGOWEN UMC, DR BURTON F BLAIR
WESLEY UMC, REV MADELINE MITCHELL
MT VERNON UMC, REV MADELINE MITCHELL
INDIAN BAYOU UMC, REV ROSS W GENDER
CENTENARY UMC, REV ROSS W GENDER
ST PAUL UMC/ JEANERETTE, REV FULTON A RAYMOND, SR
FITZGERALD UMC, REV FULTON A RAYMOND, SR
MT ZION UMC, REV FULTON A RAYMOND, SR
ST PETER UMC, REV ERICA JENKINS
MALLALIEU UMC, REV ERICA JENKINS
ASBURY UMC/ LAFAYETTE, REV T EDWARD BOYD
CHURCH OF THE COVENANT, REV W RALPH FORD
FIRST UMC/ LAFAYETTE, REV W SPILLER MILTON
NORTHWOOD UMC, REV DARRYL A TATE
LYDIA UMC, REV ROBERT W CORMIER
MEMORIAL UMC/ MATTHEWS, REV VERNON FAIRLEY
MELVILLE UMC, REV KENNETH B CHAPMAN
PALMETTO UMC, REV KENNETH B CHAPMAN
ST JAMES UMC, REV MARGUERITE D JENKINS
PHARR CHAPEL UMC, REV T LYNN MALONE, JR
WALMSLEY UMC, REV DAN WASHINGTON, JR
MASON UMC, REV DAN WASHINGTON, JR
FIRST UMC/ NEW IBERIA, REV MICHAEL MCLAURIN
ST JAMES UMC, REV EMMETT C COLLINS, JR
BRIGGS UMC, REV EMMETT C COLLINS, JR
MT ZION UMC, REV EMMETT C COLLINS, JR
FIRST UMC/NEW ROADS, REV R DON GENTRY
LOUISIANA MEM UMC, REV K DALE HENSARLING
ST MARK UMC, REV DAVIS W CLARK
PATTERSON UMC, REV L JOHN LOCASCIO
KROTZ SPRINGS UMC, REV TERRY LINDSEY
WILSON MEMORIAL UMC, REV TERRY LINDSEY
SCOTT CHAPEL UMC, REV DIANE BENTLEY
ST PAUL UMC/ NEW ROADS, REV DIANE BENTLEY
ST PAUL UMC/ WAXIA, REV CLIFTON WILLIAMS
WILEY UMC, REV CAROLYN G ROSS
GREEN CHAPEL UMC, REV CAROLYN G ROSS
CALVARY UMC, REV CLIFTON C CONRAD, SR
FIRST UMC/ THIBODAUX, REV WYBRA J PRICE, II
VACHERIE UMC, REV WYBRA J PRICE, II
MAGNOLIA UMC, REV JOSEPH HOLLAND

ALEXANDRIA

FIRST UMC/ ALEXANDRIA, REV ROY T JAMES
HORSESHOE DRIVE UMC, REV R DON ROSS
NEWMAN UMC, REV ERNEST E SCOTT
ST MARK'S UMC, REV FRANK DOUG RANDAL
TRINITY UMC, REV C FRANCES HOOTON
WILTON UMC, REV MICHAEL CAFFERY
COULEY UMC, REV TOM MAY
BETHEL UMC, DR GEORGE A MCVAY
FIRST UMC/ BOYCE, REV WILLIAM K MCDONALD
MACARTHUR DRIVE UMC, REV WILLIAM K MCDONALD
LAHEY CHAPEL UMC, REV GLINDA M DOUCET
SIEPER UMC, REV GLINDA M DOUCET
UNION UMC, REV DIANNE ALLEN
ST. MARK'S UMC, REV HURVEY SWEAZIE, JR
DAVID HAAS MEMORIAL UMC, REV DOUG MILLIRON
RINITY UMC, REV DOUG MILLIRON
WHITE'S CHAPEL UMC, REV DOUG MILLIRON
CAMPTI UMC, REV FRANK G YOUNT
ST MAURICE UMC, REV FRANK G YOUNT
ST PAUL UMC/ CAMPTI, REV HURVEY SWEAZIE, JR
ST PAUL UMC/ CHENEYVILLE, REV OBIE J SOUTHALL
COLFAX UMC, REV JAMES REID
EDEN UMC, REV DOUGLAS DAVIS
FELLOWSHIP UMC /HINESTON, REV RICHARD HOOTON
NOLLEY MEM UMC/ JENA, REV MARK B BENGE, SR
BELAH UMC, REV JOHN R JOHNS
OAK GROVE UMC / EFFIE, REV DAVID CARLTON
BAYOU CHICOT UMC, REV CHARLES SKINNER
CHENEYVILLE UMC, REV CHARLES SKINNER

MARKSVILLE UMC, REV EMILY R WINBERY
EVERGREEN UMC, REV EMILY R WINBERY
SIMMESPORT UMC, REV EMILY R WINBERY
BEULAH UMC, REV JOHN R FOSTER
MONTGOMERY UMC, DR JIMMY WALKER
MT ZION UMC, DR JIMMY WALKER
ASBURY UMC/ NATCHITOCHES, REV JAMES A GRAHAM
EMMANUEL UMC, REV JAMES A GRAHAM
COLLEGE AVENUE UMC, REV FRANK YOUNT
PROVENCAL UMC, REV HUGH DON DAVIS
WEAVER UMC, REV HUGH DON DAVIS
FIRST UMC/ NATCHITOCHES, REV DOUGLAS L CAIN
OLLA UMC, REV GLORIA YOUNGBLOOD
URANIA UMC, REV GLORIA YOUNGBLOOD
PALESTINE UMC, REV J EDWIN DILWORTH
FIRST UMC/ PINEVILLE, REV J RODDY TAYLOR
PLEASANT GROVE UMC, REV GEORGE A MCVAY
WESLEY UMC, REV JAMES E RAY, SR
WESLEY UMC/ BOONEVILLE, REV JAMES E RAY, SR
POLLOCK UMC, REV BRYANT E GORE
LIBERTY CHAPEL UMC, REV BRYANT E GORE
SANDERS CHAPEL UMC, REV DORCAS A THORNTON
STRANGE UMC, REV DORCAS A THORNTON
EDDY JUSTISS MEMORIAL UMC, REV JOHN R JOHNS
FIRST UMC/ WINNFIELD, REV BARRY HOEKSTRA

BATON ROUGE

BLACKWATER UMC, REV MARK R MARTIN
FIRST UMC/ BAKER, REV THOMAS E DOLPH
BROADMOOR UMC, REV ROBERT L BURGESS
CAMPBOR MEMORIAL UMC, REV ROGER D LATHAN
FIRST UMC/ BATON ROUGE, DR CHRISTOPHER H ANDREWS
INGLESIDE UMC, REV JOSEPH M DONAKY
JEFFERSON UMC, REV CAROL S WINN
JORDAN UMC, REV CLARENCE L HILLARD
ST PETER UMC/ MARINGOUIN, REV CLARENCE L HILLARD
NEELY UMC, REV ARNOLD V BROWN
ST MARK UMC/ BATON ROUGE, REV JOSEPH D AWOTWI
ST PAUL UMC, REV FRANK B AKIN
WESLEY UMC/ BATON ROUGE, REV ANDREW GOFF
CLINTON UMC, REV J PENN MORGAN
CLEAR CREEK UMC, REV J PENN MORGAN
MT ZION UMC, REV H LOUIS JONES
ST PAUL UMC, REV H LOUIS JONES
ST PETER UMC, REV LAURENCE E HALL
ST JAMES UMC/ CONVENT, REV GAYNELL PITTMAN
FIRST UMC/ DONALDSONVILLE, REV WILLIAM V TURNER
LUTCHER UMC, REV WILLIAM V TURNER
ST JAMES UMC/BELLE ROSE, REV JAMES N KIRK
CARPENTER'S CHAPEL/GALVEZ, REV CHRIS A BLANCHARD
GONZALES UMC, REV GARY DON WILLIS
MAGNOLIA UMC, REV ELLEN B MONTEGUDO
JACKSON UMC, REV DAVID J SHEEHAN
ETHEL UMC, REV DAVE SHEEHAN
ST LANDRY UMC / GONZALES, REV GREGORY MCCLAY, SR
SHILOH UMC / MARINGOUIN, REV CURTIS JOHNSON
LEJEUNE UMC, REV CURTIS JOHNSON
FIRST UMC/ PLAQUEMINE, REV DONALD R MORGAN
GRAND RIVER UMC, REV E CARROLL JOHNSON
HURST CHAPEL UMC, REV THOMAS A WESLEY
ST LUKE UMC, REV THOMAS A WESLEY
SCOTT UMC/ PORT ALLEN, REV ULYSSE STEPHENS
HARTZELL UMC / ROSEDALE, REV ULYSSE STEPHENS
MEADOWS CHAPEL UMC, REV ANGUS L CARRUTH
BETHEL UMC / PRIDE, REV WILLIAM H MCLAIN
ANDREW CHAPEL UMC/WATSON, DR GEORGE W C CALVIN, SR
NEW RIVER UMC / ST. AMANT, REV ROGER E MOSHER
ST FRANCISVILLE UMC, REV HAROLD B BABIN
SLAUGHTER UMC, REV L DARWIN BRECHEEN
BLUFF CREEK UMC, REV L DARWIN BRECHEEN
NEW HOPE UMC/ SPILLMAN, REV JESSE L MEANS, JR
CONCORD UMC, REV JESSE L MEANS, JR
TUNICA UMC, REV MICHAEL G MILLER
WESLEY UMC/ WILSON, REV DEMETRIC L SLAUGHTER
ASBURY UMC/ NORWOOD, REV DEMETRIC L SLAUGHTER
BEECH GROVE UMC, REV WILLIE LAWS
MOSES CHAPEL UMC, REV WILLIE LAWS
MT CARMEL UMC, REV WILLIE LAWS
ZACHARY UMC, REV ALAN EINSEL
LUTCHER CHAPEL UMC, REV GREGORY MCCLAY, SR

LAKE CHARLES

WAKEFIELD UMC, REV GARY L VAN HORN
GRAND CHENIER UMC, REV GARY L VAN HORN
CHURCH POINT UMC, REV FRED M FRASER
FIRST UMC/ CROWLEY, REV ROBERT E HOLLIS
FIRST UMC/ DEQUINCY, REV CAROLYN B VOLENTINE
FIRST UMC/ DERIDDER, REV JON E TELLIFERO
MERRYVILLE UMC, REV KARI IFLAND
BRANCH UMC, REV CAGE M MCLEMORE
FAIRVIEW UMC, REV FRANK DAVIS
PROSPECT UMC / FLORIEN, DR WILLIAM R BOYD
HORNBECK UMC, DR WILLIAM R BOYD
GUEYDAN UMC, REV JAMES R SCHAUB
KAPLAN UMC, REV JAMES R SCHAUB
HOPEWELL UMC, REV MARK S THERIOT
PINE GROVE UMC, REV MARK S THERIOT
IOWA UMC, REV DAVID R DEWITT
JENNINGS UMC, REV J RICHARD SCOTT-WELCH
FIRST UMC/ LK CHAS, REV DOUGLAS DEGRAFFENRIED
OAK PARK UMC, REV TOMMY R BERGERON, SR
ST LUKE-SIMPSON UMC, REV JAMES HUMPHREYS
UNIVERSITY UMC/ LK CHAS, REV THOMAS L HOWE, JR
FIRST UMC/ LEESVILLE, REV G LARRY MAXWELL, SR
HOLLY GROVE UMC, REV G LARRY MAXWELL, SR
KOREAN UMC, REV LEE ECKERLE
MT ZION UMC/ LEESVILLE, REV ROBERT M ECKERLE, JR
MACEDONIA UMC, REV ROBERT M ECKERLE, JR
HASKIN CHAPEL UMC, REV ROBERT M ECKERLE, JR
MOSS BLUFF UMC, REV DANIEL P GLEASON
OAKDALE UMC, REV ELIZABETH M NORTHEN
OBERLIN UMC, REV JEROLD R HOFFPAUIR
BASILE UMC, REV JEROLD R HOFFPAUIR
RAYMOND UMC, REV THOMAS C BEELER
ELTON UMC, REV THOMAS C BEELER
ROANOKE UMC, REV SUSAN C PUGH
SQUYRES UMC, REV RAYMOND H LEIDIG, JR
HENNING MEM UMC, REV C RICHARD HOFFPAUIR
MAPLEWOOD UMC, REV KAREN F DAVIS
WESLEY UMC/ SULPHUR, REV LEON A BOGGS
HACKBERRY UMC, REV LEON A BOGGS
SWEETLAKE UMC, REV WAYNE G TAYLOR
WELSH MEM UMC, REV JERRY LEE JOHNSON
WELSH UMC, REV WILSON BRENT
HAYES UMC, REV WILSON BRENT
JONES UMC, REV MARVETTE J THOMAS
MALLALIEU UMC / JENNINGS, REV MARVETTE J THOMAS
WESTLAKE UMC, REV TED D FREELAND

MONROE

FIRST UMC/ BASTROP, REV FRANK M JONES
COLLINSTON UMC, REV FRANK M JONES
MEMORIAL UMC, REV JOHN G DESCHNER
MER ROUGE UMC, REV JOHN G DESCHNER
MT OLIVE UMC, REV JOHNNY M RILEY
BOEUF PRAIRIE UMC, REV WILLIAM L STRONG
FIRST UMC/ COLUMBIA, REV PAMELA FITCH
HEBERT UMC, REV PAMELA FITCH
UNION UMC, REV MARGARET L BROWN
DELHI UMC, REV JOSEPH L ROUNTREE
CROWVILLE UMC, REV JOSEPH L ROUNTREE
EPPS UMC, REV ROBERT D HAYES
PIONEER UMC, REV ROBERT D HAYES
SEVIER MEM UMC/ FERRIDAY, REV ROBERT G ROWLAND
GRAYSON UMC, REV HOWARD HUDSON
LOCUST GROVE UMC, REV LINDA K SHEPHERD
FIRST UMC/ LK PROVIDENCE, REV WALTER L PARKER, JR
MANGHAM UMC, REV BETTY L SWANSON
FIRST UMC/ MONROE, REV LARRY R STAFFORD
ST PAUL UMC, REV JACKIE HOLMES, JR
LEA JOYNER MEM UMC, REV WELDON C BARES
MEMORIAL UMC / MONROE, REV JAYNE TRAMMELL-KELLY
ST JAMES UMC / MONROE, REV MARY ANN COLLIE
ST MARK'S UMC, REV JULIET A DESCHNER
ST PAUL'S UMC / MONROE, REV RICHARD H HUMPHRIES
NEWELLTON, TBS
OAK RIDGE UMC, REV LOUIS W REDDEN
RAYVILLE UMC, REV R RAY SPILLER
HOLLY RIDGE UMC, REV R RAY SPILLER
ST ANDREWS UMC, REV JACK PHELPS

BARTHOLOMEW UMC, REV JACK D PHELPS
ST JOSEPH UMC, REV KIBBIE E HATFIELD
FIRST UMC/ WATERPROOF, REV KIBBIE E HATFIELD
FIRST UMC/ SICILY ISLAND, REV SAMUEL P EMANUEL
FIRST UMC/ HARRISONBURG, REV SAMUEL EMANUEL
FIRST UMC/ TALLULAH, REV FRED W FULTON, IV
WASHINGTON CHAPEL UMC, REV ANICE N MOSES
MT SINAI UMC, REV ANICE N MOSES
MT NEBO UMC, REV ANICE N MOSES
LAWSON CHAPEL UMC, REV ANICE N MOSES
CLAIBORNE UMC, REV ALFRED BAKEWELL, III
FIRST UMC/ W MONROE, REV KARL SHERMAN KLAUS
MCGUIRE UMC, REV MICHAEL T HEAD
WOODLAWN UMC, REV LINDA E SABIN
FIRST UMC/ WINNSBORO, REV WILLIAM A MOON, III
GILBERT UMC, REV WILLIAM A MOON, III
WISNER UMC, REV I FRANCES GUY
BASKIN UMC, REV A ELIZABETH EMANUEL

NEW ORLEANS

BELLE CHASSE UMC, REV W ARNOLD ROBERTS
TRINITY UMC/ BURAS, REV GENE M FAURIE
HOPE CHAPEL UMC, REV GENE M FAURIE
ST CHARLES UMC, REV J THOMAS LOGAN
BOYNTON UMC, REV ISSAC BIVENS
GREटना UMC, REV LEWIS L OLMSTED
MESSIAH UMC, REV SAMUEL CALVO
EL MESIAS, REV SAMUEL CALVO
THOMAS UMC, REV KARL CLARK
FIRST UMC/ LAPLACE, REV KENNETH M GRAHAM, JR
METAIRIE UMC, REV RHONDA E FEURTADO
MUNHOLLAND UMC, REV T NICHOLS EVANS, JR
ST MATTHEWS UMC, REV H A HARRINGTON, JR
ASBURY UMC/ NEW ORLEANS, DR ANDREW J DOUGLAS
ST MATTHEW UMC, DR ANDREW J DOUGLAS
AURORA UMC, REV W ODELL SIMMONS
BETHANY UMC/ NEW ORLEANS, REV HADLEY R EDWARDS
SHAW TEMPLE UMC, REV DALE E BRANCH
CARROLLTON UMC, REV JEFFREY D CONNOR
FIRST STREET UMC, REV ABRAHAM E DAVIS
GRACE UMC, REV WALTER B PENNINGTON
JEFFERSON UMC, REV REBECCA D CONNER
LAKE VISTA UMC, REV NORWOOD HINGLE, III
MT ZION UMC/ NEW ORLEANS, REV VICTOR T MCCULLOUGH
NAPOLEON AVENUE UMC, REV JUDITH A SHEMA
PEOPLES UMC, REV SAMUEL WALKER
PHILLIPS MEM UMC, REV L STACY COWAN
RAYNE MEMORIAL UMC, REV DONALD C COTTRILL
ST LUKE'S UMC, REV WESLEY C REAGAN
ST MARK'S UMC, REV GREGOR A DIKE
ST PAUL'S UMC/ HARAHAN, REV ELLEN J BLUE
ST PHILIP UMC, REV LESLIE M TAYLOR, SR
ST JAMES UMC/ HAHNVILLE, REV SAMUEL E BUTLER, SR

NORTH SHORE

AMITE UMC, REV WILLIAM H WILLIS, SR
INDEPENDENCE UMC, REV WILLIAM H WILLIS, SR
WESLEY RAY UMC, REV BRUCE L BROWN
MARYS CHAPEL UMC, REV BRUCE L BROWN
LIVE OAK UMC, REV BRUCE L BROWN
ELIZABETH SULLIVAN MEM UM, REV HULEN C WARREN, JR
THIRKIELD UMC, REV LOUIS A SMITH
HARRY'S CHAPEL UMC, REV LOUIS A SMITH
BUSH UMC, REV KARL D WOOD
FIRST UMC/ COVINGTON, REV M EUGENE FINNELL
FITZGERALD UMC, REV PERCY M FRAZIER
WALDHEIM UMC, REV PERCY M FRAZIER
DAYS UMC, DR LARRY D ROBERTSON
CENTER UMC, DR LARRY D ROBERTSON
DARLINGTON UMC, DR LARRY D ROBERTSON
FIRST UMC/ DENHAM SPRINGS, REV KIRBY VINING
ROBERTS UMC, REV ALONZO J CAMPBELL
ST LUKE UMC, REV ALONZO J CAMPBELL
CENTENARY UMC, REV LYNdle R BULLARD
FISHER UMC, REV LYNdle BULLARD
WINAN UMC, REV TERRENCE S AUGUST
HAYES CHAPEL UMC, REV TERRENCE S AUGUST
GREENSBURG UMC, REV WILLIAM G SEWELL
WESLEY CHAPEL UMC, REV WILLIAM G SEWELL
FIRST UMC/ HAMMOND, REV RICKY R WILLIS
JAMES CHAPEL UMC, REV CAROL RICHARDSON
LEE'S LANDING UMC, REV CAROL RICHARDSON
KENTWOOD UMC, REV FRED B MOORE, JR
MT HERMON UMC, REV FRED B MOORE, JR
LACOMBE UMC, REV LAWRENCE K BENSON
LIVINGSTON UMC, REV RICHARD DAVIS
LORANGER UMC, REV EMILE E TOSSO, III
COOPER'S CHAPEL UMC, REV EMILE E TOSSO, III

CHURCH OF THE SERVANT, REV BARRY HUGHES
NEWELL UMC, REV NOLAN M ROBINSON
ST TIMOTHY ON N/ShORE UMC, REV JAMES W MITCHELL
PEARL RIVER UMC, REV TIMOTHY M SMITH
PINE GROVE UMC, REV EDDIE E MORGAN, JR
MONTPELIER UMC, REV EDDIE E MORGAN, JR
NESOM MEM. TICKFAW UMC, REV EDDIE E MORGAN, JR
PINE RIDGE UMC, REV CLINTON P LOVELL
TANGIPAHOA UMC, REV CLINTON P LOVELL
FIRST UMC/ PONCHATOULA, REV ROBERT L DEICH
WESLEY CHAPEL UMC, REV DEBRA M PELOW
MAUREPAS UMC, REV DEBRA M PELOW
ALDERSGATE UMC, REV DAVID F FORTUNA
FIRST UMC/ SLIDELL, REV JOE W MCCLAIN
HARTZELL MT ZION UMC, REV DARLENE MOORE-JAMES
FIRST UMC/ SPRINGFIELD, REV E RAND GUY
HUFF CHAPEL UMC, REV E RAND GUY
ST JAMES UMC, REV LEROY BRUMFIELD
NINDE CHAPEL UMC, REV LEROY BRUMFIELD
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VARNADO UMC, REV ESTER L HAMMOND
MANGUM CHAPEL UMC, REV WANDA COSENTINO
FRIENDSHIP UMC, REV LEWIS M MORRIS, JR
CORBIN UMC, REV LEWIS M MORRIS, JR
LIVE OAK UMC, REV MARK E CROSBY

RUSTON

ANSLEY UMC, REV CHRISTOVER S GANN
ARCADIA UMC, DR A WAYNE EVANS
MT MARIAH UMC, DR A WAYNE EVANS
ARIZONA UMC, REV WILLIAM J MAXEY
ATHENS UMC, REV CHARLES R PENUELL
BERNICE UMC, REV BILLY MINYARD
BEECH GROVE UMC, REV BILLY MINYARD
SUMMERFIELD UMC, REV BILLY MINYARD
BEULAH UMC, REV TROY B GARRETT
BRUSHWOOD UMC, REV MARK FOSTER
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BETHEL UMC, REV OWEN H PEYTON, SR
DOYLINE UMC, REV LARRY FISHER
DUBACH UMC, REV JON LORD
HARMONY CHAPEL UMC, REV JON LORD
EROS UMC, REV NEWTON M HORNE, JR
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INDIAN VILLAGE UMC, REV CC MILSTEAD
LISBON UMC, REV REGINALD COLVIN
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CLAY UMC, REV KENNETH A KLEMME
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ANTIOCH UMC/ SIMSBORO, REV BO HORNE
GRACE UMC/ RUSTON, REV KENNETH R BOWMAN
TRINITY UMC/ RUSTON, REV FRED B WIDEMAN
WESLEY CHAPEL UMC, REV BYRD L TERRY
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WHITEHALL UMC, REV DAVID G BAZER
COLQUITT UMC, REV DAVID G BAZER
EVERGREEN UMC, REV DAVID G BAZER

SHREVEPORT

BENTON UMC, REV MARK BRAY
BETHEL UMC, REVS CHAS/FRANCES FREEMAN
COUSHATTA UMC, REV RICHARD M BOYETT
WESLEY CHAPEL UMC, REV RICHARD M BOYETT
CROSSROADS UMC, REV JAMES R HUBER
HALL SUMMIT UMC, REV JAMES R HUBER
BETHANY UMC, REV WALTER L PARR, JR
HOSSTON UMC, REV EDMUN LEE FRANKIE
IDA UMC, REV JERRY A MEANS
LOGANSPOrt UMC, REV W MARK STRICKLAND
LONGSTREET UMC, REV THOMAS A WILSON
KEATCHIE UMC, REV THOMAS A WILSON
FIRST UMC/ MANSFIELD, REV LELAND D WADE
GRAND CANE UMC, REV LELAND D WADE
WESLEY UMC/ MANSFIELD, REV S CHARLES BYRD
ROSA UMC, REV S CHARLES BYRD
ST MATTHEW UMC, REV S CHARLES BYRD
MANY UMC, REV CHARLES CREWS
MOORINGSPOrt UMC, REV ERIC HUFFMAN
OIL CITY UMC, REV CHERYL NELSON
BELCHER UMC, REV CHERYL NELSON
PLAIN DEALING UMC, REV HENRY M HAMILTON
WALKER'S CHAPEL UMC, REV HENRY M HAMILTON
PLEASANT HILL UMC, REV DORIS SHEPPARD
PELICAN UMC, REV CARL D MUNYON
PLEASANT VALLEY UMC, REV OSCAR E PLAYER
MT ZION UMC, REV OSCAR E PLAYER
FAIRVIEW UMC, REV OSCAR E PLAYER
NEW LIGHT UMC, REV OSCAR E PLAYER
SHADY GROVE UMC, REV GEORGE L THOMAS
BONCHEST, REV GEORGE L THOMAS
VIVIAN UMC, REV RAMONALYNN BETHLEY
ZWOLLE UMC, REV BONITA DAVIS
NOBLE UMC, REV BONITA DAVIS
BAYOU SCIE UMC, REV BONITA DAVIS
ASBURY UMC, REV JERRY G HILBUN
BARKSDALE UMC, REV PAUL C CARROLL, SR
BLANCHARD UMC, REV LOUIS RAY BRANTON
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GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH, REV ROBERT A WEBER
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LOVE CHAPEL UMC, REV ELLEN ALSTON
MANGUM UMC, REV GREGORY R DAVIS
MCDONALD UMC, REV DONNY R NEDD
MORNINGSIDE UMC, REV RICHARD L COCKBURN
MT ZION UMC, REV CLYDE T SMITH
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ST JAMES UMC, REV WILLIE L HENRY
JEWELLA UMC, REV WILLIE L HENRY
ST LUKES UMC, REV STEVEN PORTER
ST PAUL UMC/ SHREVEPORT, REV KEN FISHER
ROUND GROVE UMC , REV KEN FISHER
FIRST UMC/ SHREVEPORT, DR R PAT DAY
SUMMER GROVE UMC, REV BRYAN S DAUPHIN
TRINITY UMC/ SHREVEPORT, REV JUDITH D BAZER
HAUGHTON UMC, REV JUDITH D BAZER

Don't forget to sign up for the retreat for all persons under appointment Feb. 19-21!

Registration deadline: Feb.1

All retreatants are asked to bring a symbol that reflects their faith journey and ministry.

Please register directly with the Conference Center at (318) 449-4500.

Rio Bravo, *from page 1*

ture was a 12 feet by 16 feet concrete block home, with sheet metal roofing, wooden doors and window frames. The teams finished the work in only three days.

The youth were exuberant about the project. "I felt changed when I returned to our home at night; like I really was making a difference in someone's life. That feeling was glorious, and despite my fatigue, I could not wait for the next day of more intense manual labor," wrote Karynne Abel, a youth from First UMC, Gonzales.

The mother of one of the families to receive a home was a small, young woman named Maria. She had two beautiful daughters, Lupita and Rosaria. Maria's husband, Oscar, was never met by the group because he left for work before their arrival each day. Howe and the others learned that Maria was expecting twins within the month.

Although the family welcomed the arrival of the babies, there was significant cause for concern. "One day, we learned from our host, Karensa Fisher, and the clinic nurse, Emily, that Maria needed to have a Cesarean section at the local hospital. They believed this proce-

dures would cost about \$400 U.S. dollars, which Maria and her family could not afford. Without the operation, Maria would most likely lose the twins," said Howe.

That evening, at worship, the group unanimously decided to try to raise the money for Maria's operation by presenting her story to their respective local churches. "It was wonderful to see these young people so moved to Christian action. They really understood that our mission was not only about building houses. It was also about building relationships with the families we serve," said Howe.

The group left Rio Bravo with two houses finished, knowing that their mission was not complete. Over the next two weeks, at least three conference churches were able to respond with donations. The funds were forwarded to Tim Acton, coordinator of the Hands Together Ministry in Rio Bravo.

They received the good news that Maria gave birth to two healthy boys, Carlos and Oscar, on August 22. Fortunately, the cost of the delivery was less than expected, and the group asked Acton to apply remaining funds toward



Stephanie Hudgens and Davilynn Nation of Leesville, Texas, refurbish a home as part of a recent mission to Rio Bravo, Mexico.

baby items for the boys, and other pressing needs within the community.

"I ran into Emily, the clinic nurse at Rio Bravo, at a VIM celebration this past November. She told me that the twins were doing fine, and that Maria had gotten a job stuffing flyers for a company,

which enabled her to work out of her 'new home.' I still think of Maria and all the families in Rio Bravo often. God works in powerful ways, and He was truly at work in the lives of those 18 youth. He blessed us through that relationship we have with Him," said Howe.

Louisiana Methodist Children's Home New Century Club Donors 2000

The Century Club is a project of the Board of La. United Methodist Children and Family Services, Inc. Membership in the Century Club requires an annual contribution of \$100. The Louisiana Methodist Children's Home is a non-profit organization which ministers to Louisiana's youth, ages 12-17. Donations to the Children's Home are used to help the needs of this ministry. To become a member of the Century Club, send your check for \$100 with the enclosed coupon. The following names have become new Century Club members since the last honor roll list in the November 10, 2000, issue of "LouisianaNOW!".

ALL-SERV Industrial LLC, Sulphur
Dr. H. Whitney Boggs, Jr., Shreveport
C & E Supply, Inc., Eunice
Rev. and Mrs. Stone Caraway, Monroe
David Chozen/MANPOWER, Lake Charles
Mr. and Mrs. William M. Coffey, Baton Rouge
Mrs. Stuart (Don) Greer, Monroe
Bishop and Mrs. William Hutchinson, Baton Rouge
Mt. Mariah UMC, Arcadia
Mt. Mariah Adult SS Class, Arcadia
Pat and Carolyn Patterson, Start
Rev. and Mrs. William D. Peeples, Shreveport
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph C. Piro, Ridgeland, MS
Paul and Joanne White, Boyce

CENTURY CLUB

Yes, I would like to join the Century Club of Louisiana Methodist Children's Home. I understand my yearly pledge of \$100 is due by June 30.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone: _____

Name for Century Club Brochure if different from above: _____

Mail your check with this coupon to:
 Louisiana Methodist Children's Home
 PO Box 929
 Ruston, LA 71273-0929
 ATTN: Century Club

Willis appointed missionary coordinator

Sarah Willis believes that forming effective relationships with the local church is the key to success for district missionaries. "We must be ready to respond to the ever-changing needs of local churches, and other ministry units," said Willis.



Willis

Since October, she has served as part-time conference coordinator for district missionaries. Willis resources the district missionaries by scheduling their training events, meetings and linkages with other resource persons. She will be the liaison between the Conference Ministry Team, the Conference Office and the missionaries.

With more than 20 years experience in hospital nursing, Willis currently works as a consultant for the Infection Control Department of Woman's Hospital in Baton Rouge.

Willis grew up in The United Methodist Church. Her mother, Nelwyn G. Hollenshead, served as church secretary for First UMC in Baton Rouge while Drs. Homer Vanderpool and Lewis Stuckey were pastors there.

Currently serving as missionary for the North Shore District Ministry Team, Willis has held various adult leadership positions within the local church, including Worship Committee Chair, Choir Director, Youth Coordinator, and Administrative Council member.

She leads a couples Sunday school class with husband Todd at Kentwood UMC.

CONFERENCE CALENDAR

JANUARY

26-27 Strategic Planning Seminar: Tri-District Training for North Shore, New Orleans, and Baton Rouge Districts
 26-27 VIM Team Leaders Training

Jan. 26: First UMC, Hammond (pastors only)
 Jan. 27: SLU (all)
 La. Conference Center

FEBRUARY

1-4 Volunteers in Mission
 2-3 License to Preach School
 2-4 Senior High Retreat #1
 3 District Ministry Team Training
 4 Special Offering for Louisiana Prison Chapel Foundation
 5-7 Ministers' Week
 9-11 Senior High Retreat #2
 10 Restorative Justice meeting
 16-17 License to Preach School
 16-17 Discerning the Call to Ministry

Reynosa, Mexico
 T.B.A.
 LA. Conference Center
 First UMC, Pineville
 Perkins School of Theology, Dallas
 La. Conference Center
 La. Conference Center
 T.B.A.
 La. Conference Center

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NEWS,
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WITNESS OF LOUISIANA
CONFERENCE MINISTRIES

VOL. 2, NO. 3

BATON ROUGE, LA

February 9, 2001

Workshop focuses on young adult leaders

An enthusiastic group of young adults attended a workshop on Jan. 27 entitled "Relevant Leadership Enhancement." Dr. Gerald Richardson, director of Conference Spiritual Leadership Development- General Board of Discipleship, and Rev. Hadley R. Edwards, pastor of Bethany UMC, New Orleans served as resource leaders for

the workshop, which was sponsored by the United Methodist Louisiana Conference Board of Laity.

The event focused on exploring church history, identifying faith issues, and developing leadership skills to be used for work in the local church. "I really enjoyed the presentation Dr. Richardson made on the history of

United Methodism, especially the part about how even John Wesley had struggled with his faith. I believe that a lot of young adults can identify with that situation, and it's comforting to know that the founder of our denomination faced some of the same challenges," said

See Workshop, page 6

Announcing
Annual Conference
This Year's Theme:

*Alive in the Spirit
Walking in the Way*

June 3-6, 2001
Centenary College
Shreveport

INSIDE



Igniting Ministry training set for April /8



**College Avenue UMC
draws a crowd with
give-away /5**

- ☐ Acadiana District /4
- ☐ Alexandria District /5
- ☐ World Watch /7
- ☐ In Brief /7



Photo by Joshua Lewis

Rising to the task

Members of Slidell United Methodist Church lay down plywood on a ramp they are building for Grand Isle UMC. Like many structures on the island, the church sits on piers and the ramp had to rise more than 10 vertical feet to reach the sanctuary.

Group builds wheelchair ramp for Grand Isle UMC

BY BETTY BACKSTROM
EDITOR

Sue Galliano is an active member of Grand Isle United Methodist Church. "Our church is very small, but during tourist season, we have lots of 'snowbirds' who travel our way during the winter. A lot of these tourists are elderly, and a number of them stay for months at a time. This trend has given our church a 'winter congregation,' of sorts, that often experiences challenges climbing our church stairs. Although the stairs are negotiable, we wanted to be in compliance with building regulations and standards by being handicapped accessible. We also wanted to be more accommodating to our visitors. We just didn't know how to tackle this project. Then Sonny

see GRAND ISLE UMC, page 8

Team member reflects on the need for ramps

BY WILLIAM "SONNY" CRAWFORD
FIRST UMC, SLIDELL

When most of us get up every morning, we put on our robe and slippers, go to the front door, possibly go down some steps, pick up the newspaper, and grab some coffee from the kitchen. By contrast, it is startling to consider the number of people who are forced to exist on one level, their world confined to bedroom, bathroom,

see CRAWFORD, page 8



Crawford

ON THE JOURNEY

Imagine my Surprise!

Imagine my utter surprise as well as amazement when I opened the Saturday, January 27, 2001 issue of the Baton Rouge "Advocate" and saw there two beautiful color pictures of Evangeline United Methodist Church with this headline over them: "Congregation votes to close; District leaders delay approval." I was stunned!

I felt invaded and abused. It felt as if the intimate conversations of a family had been spilled in ink before the world for everyone to read. It felt like an invasion of privacy, an abuse of one's most personal thoughts, and the publishing of protected conversation. It was as if the media had taken a sacred concern and splashed it before the community in sensational style all for the sake of "news." And religious news at that!

The lines under the picture of a near empty church read, "The few remaining members of the Evangeline United Methodist Church listen to a Sunday sermon. Membership has dwindled to less than 30 and the congregation has voted to close the North Baton Rouge church in May." According to the statistics in the 2000 Louisiana Annual Conference Journal, the membership at the end of 1999 was 297 with an average attendance of 50!

Only last week (January 18 in fact) the Cabinet first heard the report concerning Evangeline. We wrestled with that news for quite a while and began to offer thoughts as to alternative directions to go. There was no approval given for closure. Instead, there was dedicated struggle for other possibilities, with the request that we were to pray about this situation and come prepared to talk about other directions at our next meeting. And then to have this appear in the Baton Rouge newspaper was an unbelievable development!

I do not live under the illusion that everything done in the life of a congregation, or even in the confines of the Cabinet room is kept "private". But I do live under the expectation that something as sensitive as the possible



Bishop William W. Hutchinson

closing of a congregation is not to be splashed across the front of the religion page of the local newspaper, especially when such a decision has not been finalized.

Can you imagine the "hope" for Evangeline now? Why, everyone who

has eyes to read will say, "I wouldn't get involved in that church. It's closing you know!" Wow! What an uncaring, unthinking, and lethal blow to level at a struggling congregation. Perhaps if the newspaper really wanted a story, they should have waited until we had our full plan of action in place and then they would have a positive and helpful story to tell.

Possibly the story will have a very positive effect. Maybe this cavalier telling of a tale of agonizing struggle will just spur us on to do something really creative! Maybe it will be the incentive needed to make a phoenix rise from the ashes. Maybe it will be the challenge necessary to make us more sensitive to the fact that we need a United Methodist presence in North Baton Rouge and that we intend to have one of some description. I pray good will come from it all.

Right about now I have to remind myself of Paul's admonition, "Finally brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, do; and the God of peace will be with you." (Philippians 4:8-9) I wish the religion editor had thought of the same thing!

I guess it is all part of the journey...

Bill Hutchinson

Essay contest spotlights capital punishment

The annual "Peace With Justice" essay contest, sponsored by the Louisiana Conference Board of Church and Society, will focus on the issue of capital punishment.

Contestants may argue for or against, but should demonstrate an acquaintance with scripture, tradition (including the United Methodist Social Principles), reason and experience.

First place will be awarded \$500; second place, \$250; third place, \$150; and fourth place, \$100.

The length of the essay should be 500-600 words and should be submitted

no later than March 31 to:

Rev. Phil Woodland, University UMC;
3350 Dalrymple Dr.; Baton Rouge, LA 70802.

Contestants must be members of The United Methodist Church and enrolled in grades 9-12 during the 2000-2001 school year.

Resource material on capital punishment is available in each of the nine district offices, which contestants may use along with their own resources.

For further information, contact Woodland at (225) 336-9801; e-mail: jpwood929@aol.com; fax: 225-344-0530.



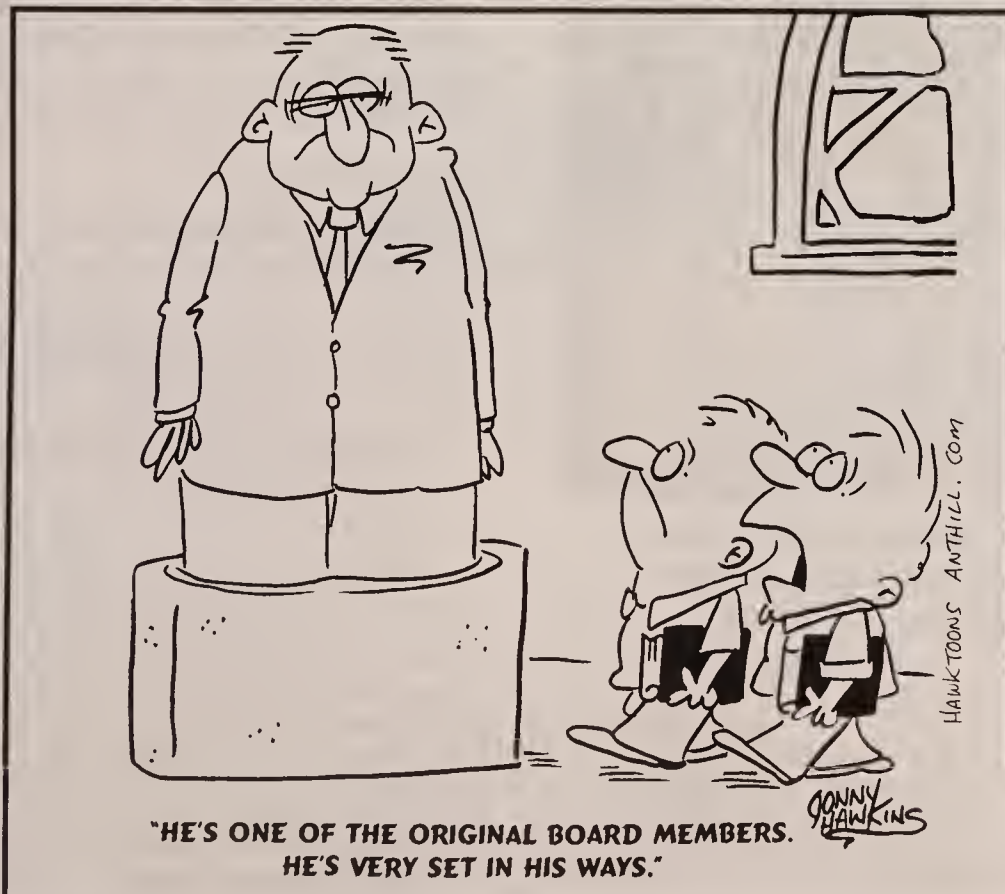
Making leaders

More than 45 people attended the annual Volunteers in Mission leader training held last month at the La. Conference Center in Woodworth. The group was comprised of lay persons and clergy who have accepted a position as team leader for one of the VIM work missions scheduled in 2001. Puerto Rico, Ecuador, Haiti, and South Africa are just a few of the countries targeted for work missions, along with certain spots in the United States. Through the training, team leaders were equipped to recruit and build groups of 10-15 volunteers for repair of churches, homes and parsonages. Leaders for 13 mini-medical teams were trained in preparation for future trips to Reynosa, Mexico. Training was conducted by Rev. Larry Norman, VIM director. He was assisted by Rev. Ann Sutton, who focused on mission training, and Rev. Wybra Price led worship. Above: Jodie Adams and violinist Kelly Andino conduct a quick tutorial of Spanish, the language spoken in many of the mission locales.

Important IRS Notice for Pastors and Treasurers

Effective Jan. 1, 2001, the mileage rate for travel was increased by the Internal Revenue Service to 34.5 cents per mile.

STAINED GLASS



Annual Clergy Spouse Retreat slated for April

Participants will have the opportunity to meet and have fellowship with Kay Hutchinson, wife of Bishop William W. Hutchinson, at the Clergy Spouse Retreat 2001, set for April 20-21 at the Louisiana Conference Center in Woodworth.

Ruston District is hosting this year's event, and organizers will be mailing out registration forms in February. If any spouse of active or retired clergy does not receive a registration form by mail, please note that each district office will have a supply of extra forms on hand. Thirty rooms have been reserved at the conference center, so organizers are encouraging early reservations.

Mary Lou Blakeman, Barbara Einsel, Marcia Wright and Nanci Youngblood will lead discussions that focus on the very real and often unique concerns of the clergy spouse.

Music will be led by Ann Wideman and Jan Humphries.

Regular participants are encouraged to invite newcomers from their respective Districts. The registration deadline for the retreat is April 12.

Methodist college scholarship applications due April 1

Applications for the Daughenbaugh-Matheny Scholarships are now being accepted from high school seniors and college students who plan to attend either Centenary College or Dillard University. All candidates must be current members of The United Methodist Church, and must hold at least a 2.5 grade point average.

A completed application form, accompanied by a letter of recommendation from a school principal, teacher, guidance counselor or church pastor, must be received by April 1. Scholarships are awarded on a yearly basis for a maximum of four years. A personal interview is required as part of the application process.

All pastors, youth coordinators, youth directors, and district offices should have copies of the application form. If a form is not available, contact the conference office for a copy. Also, forms can be downloaded from the conference web site at <http://www.la-umc.org>. Application forms should be mailed to: Louisiana Conference Scholarship Chairman, 1185 Robert E. Lee Boulevard, New Orleans, LA 70124-4332.

Clergy retreat set for Feb. 19

A spiritual renewal retreat for all persons under appointment will be held Feb. 19-21 at the Louisiana Conference Center in Woodworth.

Carole Cotton Winn will lead the retreat entitled, "Tending Our Life Together." Participants are asked to bring a symbol of their ministry to the event.

The retreat gets underway at 2 p.m. on Monday, and adjourns at 12 noon on Wednesday.



Crossing the border

Baton Rouge area United Methodists Nancy Ginn, Judd Hammond and Dr. Tony Edwards help pack pharmaceuticals bound for the Louisiana Conference Volunteers In Mission (VIM) Reynosa, Mexico, clinic and its five satellite clinics. La.-VIM benefits from relationships with several corporations which provide medicines and other supplies for the mini-medical missions. The King Pharmaceutical Benevolent Fund recently donated eyeglasses valued at more than \$380,000 for distribution in Mexico and Wal-Mart contributed 358 cases of vitamins. Numerous local corporate partners have also become involved through individual teams around Louisiana.

The new Reynosa clinic will draw joint medical and construction teams from around the conference who will pay their own travel and living expenses, raise \$1,200 for each home they construct, and collect non-narcotic medicines and medical supplies which they will transport with them. The first team to Reynosa was from First United Methodist Church, Lafayette, under the leadership of Carolyn Maughn.

Event encourages, supports those with call to ministry

Discerning the Call is an event for anyone (ages 16 and up) who is prayerfully discerning a call to ministry. If you or anyone you know is interested in finding out more about what professional ministry is and what it looks like, you are strongly encouraged to come and be a part of this weekend. Spouses are encouraged to come and be a part of this weekend, too.

The event will take place Feb. 16-17 at the Louisiana Conference Center in Woodworth.

During this weekend, participants will be given the opportunity to worship, pray, discern, sing, discover and, hopefully, find answers to the questions of ministry within their hearts and souls. We will have the opportunity to speak with our new bishop, William Hutchinson, district superintendents, and other leaders in our Conference.

Those who participate will be introduced to the offices of deacon, elder, and local pastor, as well as find out information about professional certification.

Space is limited, so respond quickly! Please complete and return the enclosed

registration form with your \$25.00 registration fee or a letter stating your need for a scholarship to:

Louisiana Conference Center,
Attn: Cathy Wimberly,
2350 Methodist Parkway,
Woodworth, LA 71485

Please make checks payable to: the Louisiana Conference Center.

The registration fee of \$25 is all that participants pay for the event. Your registration fee covers lodging and meals. The only other cost for participants is travel to and from the Conference Center. Scholarships are available for those who need help with the registration fee.

The check-in and arrival time for the event will begin at 4:00 pm, Friday, February 16; dinner will be at 5:30 pm and the opening worship will be at 7:00 pm. The event will end with worship at 4:00 pm on Saturday, February 17.

For more information concerning this event or professional ministry in general, please contact:

Rev. Danny Gleason, Chairperson of Recruitment & Enlistment
Moss Bluff United Methodist Church

735 Sam Houston Jones Parkway
Lake Charles, LA 70611
(337) 855-6241
(337) 855-6249 FAX
e-mail - mbumc@att.net

Discerning the Call Registration Form

Name _____
Age _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ ZIP _____
Daytime Phone _____
Evening Phone _____
Do you require a special diet? _____
Please explain _____
Room mate preference _____
Is there anything preventing you from sharing a room with someone else? _____
If so, please explain _____
Church _____ District _____
Spouse attending? _____
If attending, spouse name: _____

First UMC, Lafayette, joins national effort to aid homeless families

Lafayette area churches are coming together to provide emergency shelter for homeless families.

Organizers have formed an interdenominational coalition known as Interfaith Hospitality Network, which will temporarily host homeless families in church facilities while they find more permanent shelter. The initiative is an outgrowth of a national program, created by Carol Olsen, which is making its way across the country. After researching

what housing was available for the homeless in her own community, Olsen realized that there were separate facilities for men and women, but very few shelters for families.

The program is designed to assist those who are most able to return to a self sufficient life.

Once screened, families in need will be invited to stay evenings at a participating church for up to a week. Volunteers will provide supper, spend

time in meaningful fellowship, help with homework, read to children, and offer encouragement. Couples will volunteer to remain with homeless families overnight. Breakfast will be served every morning, and bag lunches provided to family members.

The families will then go on to day shelters, where social workers will assist them with resourcing, job placement, and obtaining basic needs and services. After a family has spent a week with one

host church, they rotate to another participating church for a week. The cycle continues while social workers from day shelters help the families get back on their feet.

The next meeting of the network will be Feb. 12 at 7 p.m. at First United Methodist Church, Lafayette.

Interested churches in the Lafayette area can contact Sarah Schoeffler at 234-4042 for more facts on this exciting new ministry.

Retreat to focus on "forgotten victims," women with incarcerated relatives

Women who have incarcerated relatives are invited to participate in a Kairos Outside Retreat at the Harry Smith Lodge in Broussard from March 23-25. Often the "forgotten victims," these women endure tremendous grief, disappointment and hardship because their husbands, sons, fathers and brothers are imprisoned.

Applications are now being accepted for retreat staff and participants. Team

members of the retreat staff must have participated in Cursillo, Walk to Emmaus, or a similar type of retreat. Other volunteers may come as observers, or as "angels," who will serve as musicians, prepare meals, and perform tasks as needed. Retreat staff and those wanting to attend this interdenominational retreat as guests should contact Sarah Schoeffler, 1-337-234-4042, for application forms.

Satellite seminar to focus on linking churches with business community

On March 24, Bayou Blue UMC, Houma will host Dr. John C. Maxwell's "Maximum Impact Simulcast," a live business seminar designed to help pastors connect with business people in their communities.

The seminar will be broadcast by satellite and downlinked simultaneously to over 1,500 churches across North America.

The aims of the program are to increase effectiveness in relational evangelism, and to build bridges to the business communities of participating churches.

"We are excited about this unique opportunity to connect with new and

existing friends among the business leaders in our area. Our church looks forward to sharing this highly proclaimed presentation on leadership and personal growth with our community," said Rev. Curtiss Eden.

With more than 30 years of experience as a pastor and leader of multiple organizations, Dr. Maxwell has authored more than 25 books, including his New York Times best-seller, "The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership." Through training seminars and resources, Dr. Maxwell mentors over 350,000 people each year.

For more information about the simulcast, contact Rev. Eden at 504-876-3270.



"I was naked and you gave me clothing."

The United Methodist Women of Calvary UMC, Thibodaux, recently sponsored a community-wide clothing drive. The outreach project provided needed clothes and shoes to members of the community. Rev. Clifton Conrad serves as pastor for Calvary UMC, and Gwen Streams is president of the church's UMW group.

Family Plus expands to Lafayette

Family Plus, a project of the Louisiana Methodist Children's Home designed to encourage family preservation, is expanding its efforts with a pilot program through First UMC in Lafayette. Using early intervention as the cornerstone, Family Plus seeks to expand and enhance the mission of the facility in Ruston by empowering families to obtain services in their communities, and to facilitate the reunification of families.

Therapists work to keep children with their families rather than see them go to the Ruston home years after problems develop. By addressing the needs of the entire family system, it is hoped that successful long-term changes can be made. An added bonus to the establishment of regional offices is that more consistent follow-up care is available to children and youth who have been in the Ruston home.

In January of last year, Family Plus was launched. Two therapists currently operate out of the Ruston campus, and the first regional center is successfully

running out of an office housed in the facilities of First UMC, Baton Rouge. In its first year of operation, the program helped 137 families and 432 individuals. A few of the services provided include consultations, assessment, referral, family therapy, individual and group counseling, and parent training.

Family Plus therapist James E. Brown, MA, LPC said, "We're very excited about the program and are pleased that we are able to meet the families where they are, whether in the community or in their home, and minister to their needs. We pray that God would continue to bless our efforts as we seek to strengthen our families throughout Louisiana."

From his "home base" in Baton Rouge, Brown is currently traveling to First UMC, Lafayette every Thursday to counsel with families. Final plans to open the second regional office in Lafayette should soon be completed.

If you are interested in learning more or wish to participate with Family Plus services, please contact 318-255-5020.



Bayou Blue United Methodist Women featured anchorwoman Sally-Ann Roberts as their guest speaker for UMW Sunday on Jan. 7. Roberts' message about "Sowing Seeds of Bounty" focused on serving the Lord and the important role played by UMW groups. After the service, Roberts was given the opportunity to promote her book "Going Live: An Anchorwoman Reports 'Good News'." Proceeds from the sale of the book support a mentoring organization called "Each One, Save One," co-founded by Roberts.



College Avenue UMC draws a crowd with Christmas give-away

A unique community outreach event sponsored by College Avenue UMC, Natchitoches was so successful that members are already planning future "community sweeps."

Members of the Evangelism committee decided that the choir's Christmas cantata could serve as an opportunity to draw visitors from the neighborhood around the church. As an incentive to attend the community cantata, the church purchased gifts and promoted the fact that they would be given out at the end of the performance.

The church's congregation made special donations toward the purchase of an assortment of gifts, including five children's bicycles. The featured item for the gift drawing was a new VCR, to be given to an adult attending the cantata.

On the morning of Dec. 16, a group of 16 church members loaded the gifts on a flatbed trailer being pulled by a pickup truck. George Sluppick, a local radio personality and member of College Avenue UMC, sat in the back of the truck playing music from the cantata. As the truck

drove through the neighborhood, Sluppick used a PA system to announce the event. Other church members went door-to-door handing out invitations, and personally inviting everyone to attend the cantata.

After the cantata, Rev. Frank Yount gave an invitation to accept the Lord. Observers were particularly touched by one man, who was visibly moved during the performance, and who raised his hand in acceptance.

As guests had entered the sanctuary that evening, they were given a ticket for a drawing for the larger gifts. After Rev. Yount's invitation, the drawing was held amidst lots of excitement.

All the children present were allowed to choose an item from a large basket full of gifts, so no one walked away empty handed. A time of fellowship and refreshments rounded out the special evening.

Church members volunteered to drive some of the guests home on the chilly December evening because several had small children and infants.



Rev. Frank Yount, pastor at College Avenue UMC, gives away a new bicycle to a child from the community at the church's holiday cantata.

District names new missionary

Richard Bushnell has been chosen as the new District Missioner for the Alexandria District. He will serve part-time until July, when he will retire from his current position as Principal of Aiken Optional School in Alexandria.

"I am most excited to follow God's lead as I work as the Missioner for this district," Bushnell said recently at a District Ministry Team meeting.

For most of his life, Richard has been a resident of Woodworth, living near the Louisiana Conference Center, with his life being focused on God's many missions in life. He has taught Sunday School, worked actively with youth and worked with Kairos. Bushnell is weekly active in local prison ministry.



Bushnell

He feels strongly that God's work is outside the church in our daily lives and contacts.

Richard is a member of First United Methodist Church of Alexandria, is a lay speaker and chairs the District Lay Speaking Ministry.

He has served on the Board of Laity and is presently assisting two others as they cover a three-church charge until a minister is named.

Arts festival slated for Feb. 9-18

Thirty-five years ago, an enthusiastic group of church volunteers in Alexandria started an arts festival for one very simple reason—there would be plenty of wall space in the brand new church facility of First United Methodist Church to hang paintings. Of course, a love of the arts factored heavily into the decision when organizers planned the first of what is now known as the Tom Peyton Memorial Arts Festivals.

This year's event, scheduled for Feb. 9-18, will again be held at the church, located at 2727 Jackson St. in Alexandria. The Juror for the art show will be Henry Linton, chair of the Department of Art for the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff. All events, activities and exhibits are free and open to the public.

The annual event became known as the Tom Peyton Memorial Arts Festival after the late Peyton, an associate pastor for the church in the 1970s, lost a battle with cancer.

Special events include filmmaker Pat Mire's collective look at the Cajun culture using clips from three films, and a showing of his award winning full-length fea-

ture, "Dirty Rice." This particular event is funded in part by the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Of note is a choir clinic with Allen Pote, to be held Saturday, Feb. 17 at 10 a.m. Pote is a nationally known composer of sacred music and travels extensively as a clinician for festivals and workshops.

Exhibit hours are 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Feb. 10-18, and one hour before and after scheduled events at the festival. For additional information on scheduled events, contact the church office at 1-318-443-5696.



From Russia, with love

On a visit to the United States, Rev. Olga Kotsuba, pastor of First United Methodist Church - Ekaterinburg, Russia will be welcomed to the Acadiana District by First UMC, Natchitoches on Feb. 16. Rev. Kotsuba will speak at 7 p.m., with a reception following. Along with Nolley Memorial UMC, Jena and Winnfield UMC, First UMC is part of a larger cluster of churches in the conference that forms the "supportive churches" of First UMC Ekaterinburg. Connection with the Russian church is part of the ongoing ministry of the Louisiana Annual Conference Russia Initiative Task Force, fulfilling its mission in the "Supportive Church Relationship."

Rev. Kotsuba begins her tour with a visit to Broadmoor UMC, Shreveport scheduled Feb. 13-15. After her visit to Natchitoches, she will head for Broadmoor UMC, Baton Rouge on Feb. 17. On Sunday, Feb. 18, Rev. Kotsuba will participate in a morning worship service at Munholland UMC, beginning at 11 a.m. Monday will find the visiting pastor at the Louisiana Conference Center in Woodworth, as part of a spiritual renewal retreat for pastors.

Send your church's stories to the District Communication Advisor:

Miriam Brown
3200 Kincaid Boat Rd.
Boyce, LA 71409
(318) 445-9035

One Great Hour of Sharing

Volunteers at the UMCOR Sager-Brown depot in Baldwin load supplies headed for Mozambique. This shipment was one of 28 made to 15 foreign countries and three US states last year. Typical supplies sent from the depot include health kits, school bags, layette kits and bedding packs. The total value of shipments from the Sager-Brown depot was \$2,491,440 last year. United Methodists will have an opportunity to support these efforts financially during One Great Hour of Sharing, a special offering on Sunday, April 1.



Igniting Ministry training offers churches new evangelical tools

Louisiana Conference churches will receive a promotional boost this fall from Igniting Ministry, a media campaign of The United Methodist Church. The initiative offers local churches new evangelism tools, highlighted by a series of powerful national cable network commercials designed to raise positive awareness about the church. This unique program is a coordinated effort offering resources to assist local churches in strengthening their welcoming and marketing skills.

Igniting Ministry Regional Training, sponsored by United Methodist Communications, provides churches with comprehensive planning kits and practical "how-to" guides on enhancing invitational skills.

All churches are invited to send a team (pastor and at least one lay person) to the training coordinated by Dr. Rena Yocom, Director of Ministries and Missions, at the Louisiana Conference Center in Woodworth on April 24, from 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

The registration fee of \$35 per church covers the cost of the Igniting Ministry planning kit.

Lunch is \$5 per person. Please enclose registration fee with the form below. For more information, call (225) 346-1646

Send registration form by deadline of April 10, 2001 to Betty Backstrom, 527 North Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70802. Check should be made out to Louisiana Annual Conference.



Igniting Ministry Regional Training
Registration Form
April 24, 2001

La. Methodist Conference Center in Woodworth
9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Church _____ District _____

Name (s) _____

Church Address _____

City/Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Workshop, from page 1

Lauren Frazier, member of Bethany UMC. "The session with Rev. Edwards was very helpful, because we talked about the different generations and their needs. I teach a Sunday school class at Bethany UMC, which falls into the age group known as the 'net' generation. I am in the category of Generation 'X', and although some people lump the two groups together, we are really very different. This discussion helped me to visualize a lot of things I need to do for my class," added Frazier.

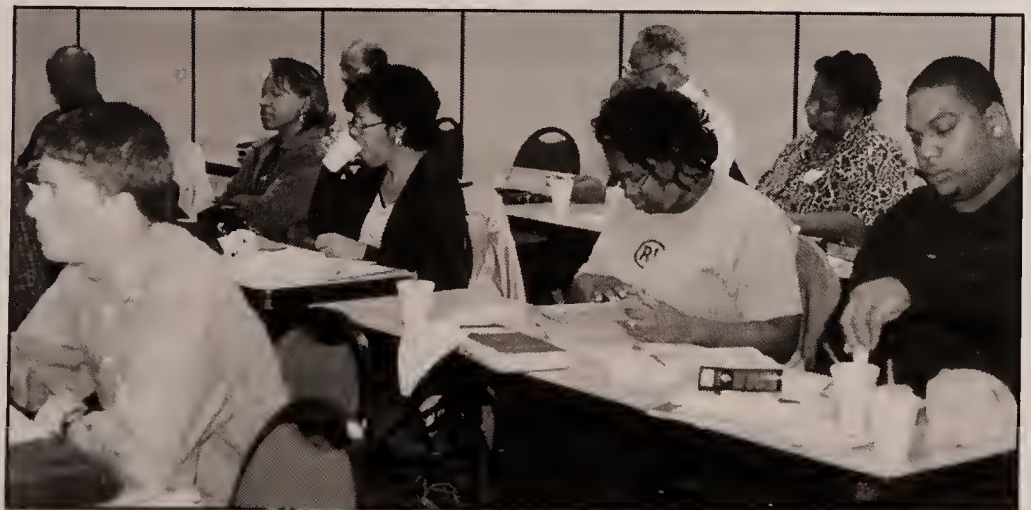
"I really enjoyed what Rev. Edwards had to say about the importance of contemporary music, and the different approaches to contemporary worship services," said Les Webb, a member of Clay UMC.

Tiphonie Chisom-Eugene, another participant, said, "I thought that the workshop was spiritually fulfilling. It made the United Methodist church more alive for me."

Dr. Anita H. Crump, conference lay leader, said, "Many of our United Methodist churches in Louisiana have aging congregations, and the young adult ministry offers a wonderful mission field. The participants of the workshop indicated that religious beliefs are very important to them, but many congregations don't know how to effectively reach those who are 19-30 years of age."

Dr. Richardson is a member of the La. Conference currently appointed to The General Board of Discipleship in Nashville, Tenn. He serves as editor of the newsletter, "Leading from the Center" and is presently a member of the Board of Ordained Ministry of the La. Conference.

Rev. Edwards serves on the District Board of Ordained Ministry and the Conference Commission on Finance and Administration. He has served in the pastoral ministry of the United Methodist Church for 22 years, and is a motivational speaker on stewardship and enhancing church participation.



Young adults from around the state attended a Jan. 27 workshop exploring church history, identifying faith issues, and developing leadership skills to be used in the local church.

IN BRIEF

Reports from United Methodist News Service

Special session will elect new Southeastern bishop

A special session of the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference will be held Feb. 26-28 in Lake Junaluska, N.C., with the purpose of electing a new United Methodist bishop to replace the late Cornelius L. Henderson. The United Methodist Church's Southeastern Jurisdiction College of Bishops made the decision Jan. 18 during a meeting in Marietta, Ga.

Although Bishop Henderson was appointed to the Florida Annual (regional) Conference, the new bishop will not necessarily be appointed there, according to Bishop Lindsey Davis, president of the college and leader of the denomination's Atlanta Area. All of the jurisdiction's episcopal appointments are open to review by the episcopal committee. "We all understand that when we elect a new bishop, all appointments are back on the table," he said. "We trust the episcopal committee to make the best decisions for the whole church." Each of the conferences in the jurisdiction will have the opportunity to nominate someone for the episcopacy, but is not required to, according to Davis.

Henderson, 66, died Dec. 7 after a two-year battle with cancer. He had served only a few months of his second four-year appointment to the Florida Conference. Bishop J. Lloyd Knox, bishop of the Florida Conference, said the election is the right thing to do. "Florida needs a strong, active bishop," he said. "Florida is a strong conference with a lot going on. We need to plant a lot of new churches and attend to the great diversity in the state."

Davis said the college of bishops believes that despite an anticipated cost of \$250,000 for the special session, a new election is the best way to provide the Florida Conference with episcopal leadership.

Thrifty preacher leaves big estate

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. — A United Methodist minister's frugal lifestyle resulted in a \$2 million estate that was divided up this month among seven charities. The Rev. Vertrue Sharp, former minister at Middlesettlements United Methodist Church in Maryville, left most of his estate -- obtained from the million-dollar sale of his farm and wise investments over the years -- to the charities, according to the Knoxville News-Sentinel newspaper.

Sharp's family said he wanted to give to the underprivileged, citing Christ's command to help the poor in Matthew 25. Sharp, who died in 1999 at age 94, was described by his family as "super intelligent" and often looking for ways to save money. (Full story is reprinted by permission of the Knoxville News-Sentinel.) {024}

United Methodist pastor gives inaugural benediction

WASHINGTON — A United Methodist minister gave the benediction in President Bush's inaugural ceremony Jan. 20, as a part of a weekend that had frequent religious expression. For the benediction that closed the official swearing-in of George W. Bush, a United Methodist, the Rev. Kirbyjon H. Caldwell focused on forgiveness, faith and favor. Caldwell, a self-designated "spiritual supporter" of Bush, is pastor of Windsor Village United Methodist Church in Houston. Caldwell requested God's favor on "President Clinton and the outgoing administration."



A UMNS photo courtesy of Dr. Francis Kateh

GANTA HOSPITAL—Children like this boy at Ganta Hospital in Liberia will have the chance for a better life after a 20-bed malnutrition unit is completed at the hospital. By working within the United Methodist connectional system, churches in Illinois were able to raise funds quickly for the new unit. The project began when Camp Point and Centennial Ebenezer United Methodist churches near Quincy, Ill., raised \$10,000 in three months for the project.

WORLD WATCH

UMNS — The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) is among many relief agencies responding to the catastrophic earthquake that struck India and Pakistan.

Centered in India's western state of Gujarat, the Jan. 26 earthquake crumbled innumerable buildings, resulting in more than 6,000 confirmed dead and an estimated death toll of 20,000 or more. Rescue workers dug through the rubble, often with bare hands, in desperate attempts to reach those trapped underneath. Hardest hit were Ahmedabad, a metropolitan area of some 7.5 million people, and Bhuj, a desert town of about 150,000.

UMCOR is responding through Action by Churches Together (ACT), a worldwide alliance of about 200 Protestant and Orthodox churches and aid agencies, and through Church's Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA) in India.

CASA and Lutheran Service-India, both ACT members, have sent relief and assessment teams to the affected area to distribute food and other urgently needed items. Many of the survivors continue to live in the open as aftershocks from the earthquakes continue.

Arrangements are being made to deliver supplies of dry food, blankets, water, utensils and shelter to help more than 35,000 people. CASA is planning to request an ACT appeal of \$1.5 million to cover those supplies, according to Disaster News Network.

Representing the Christian community in India, the council pledged to join the effort, and noted that various church organizations and relief groups already are actively involved. Donations to UMCOR's relief efforts in India and Pakistan can be made to UMCOR Advance No. 274305-0, "South Asia Earthquake." Checks can be dropped in church collection plates or mailed directly to 475 Riverside Dr., Room 330, New York, NY 10115. Credit-card donations can be made by calling (800) 554-8583.

Louisiana Conference *NOW!*

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Rena Yocom Executive Director,
Conference Mission and Ministries

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—New Address—

On the Web

You can find the Louisiana Annual
Conference on the Internet at
<http://www.la-umc.org>



Photos by Joshua Lewis

Sonny Crawford (right) sacrifices some of his morning coffee to cool the blade of a concrete cutter operated by Jerry C. Wilson, as Jerry C. Kinsey looks on. The men are members of a group at Slidell United Methodist Church that builds handicapped accessible ramps for those in need. The group's latest and largest ramp ever is the one they are building here for Grand Isle UMC, where the ramp must rise more than 10 feet to reach the door of the sanctuary.

Grand Isle UMC, from page 1

Crawford and his wonderful crew came on the scene," said Galliano.

Grand Isle UMC is served by Golden Meadow UMC, where Rev. Lloyd Scott serves as pastor. Crawford and his group connected with Rev. Scott, and prepared to tackle the biggest project they had encountered as a team.

"Up to this point, Sonny's crew had only dealt with regular house ramps. They were extremely creative in designing our ramp, which had to rise more than 10 feet high. In order for it to work, they had to incorporate four switchbacks. They have really loved the challenge, and they have done such a great job.

"Our church is so appreciative of these guys, who have made a lot of sacri-

fices for us. The least we could do was to keep them well fed, so we've done lots of cooking," said Galliano.

Grand Isle UMC also has quarters behind the church, which are available to pastors and small groups for retreats. "The atmosphere here is wonderful, and we can sleep up to eight people in beds, and a few more on the floor with bedrolls. The only cost is what we spend on electricity. We just want to offer this service to others as an outreach from our church," said Galliano. One great advantage to using this facility is that it is now handicapped accessible, thanks to the Wheelchair Ramp Outreach project. For more information about retreat reservations at the church, contact Galliano at 504-787-3780.

Crawford, from page 1

hallway, and kitchen. These are people in wheelchairs, with no way to get from the door to the sidewalk. On rare occasions, they may have visitors with enough muscle to lift them up and down. These persons are sentenced to a life that is highly restricted, and potentially dangerous.

When Jeanette Thornton, chairperson of the Missions work area for First United Methodist Church in Slidell, first began to investigate the idea for a program to build wheelchair ramps, she did not realize the great need that existed in her community. She and her husband Carol prayed about and discussed the issue, but it was a family health crisis that led Jeanette to a solution for the problem. Jeanette found herself in Lynn Haven, Florida, tending to her ill father. It was during this time that she visited a nearby church and discovered they had a unique ramp-building program in place. Over a period of five years, volunteers from the Florida church had constructed close to 50 ramps, helping to transform the lives of many wheelchair-bound men and women.

Returning to Slidell with a copy of the project plans in hand, Jeanette called a small group together to discuss the idea. Within two weeks, the program was off the ground and running.

I was one of the first people that Jeanette contacted because she knew that I enjoyed working on these kinds of projects. I had been bitten by the "mission bug" after going on a VIM work mission to Juarez. And although I am not a carpenter, my work as an explosive engineer with pipeline trenching projects brought me to many locations around the world where there were no corner hardware stores! I couldn't wait to get started.

Beginning with a crew of eight people, five ramps were built and installed on Saturdays between July 18 and August 22, 1998. Because of September rains, the group faced a backlog of eight ramps. The program was expanded to include 22 volunteers, which were divided into two teams, and still, the volunteers fell short of the demand. It was at this point that a group of eight retirees began building the ramp frames during the week, leaving the two teams free to finish installing the ramps on Saturdays.

The wheelchair ramp outreach proj-

ect currently boasts 31 volunteers who have installed 36 ramps in 30 months. The combined length of all the ramps put together is 1100 feet, which is greater than the length of two football fields.

Funding for the Slidell wheelchair outreach project comes from donations. In the first six months of the program, \$7,200 was given toward the effort. The recipients of the ramps are asked for nothing, as many of them are in need. The tools to get started on such a project are often available in congregations through its members. The cost of buying all the tools necessary for the program is approximately \$1,000.00 to \$1,500.00. Amazingly, the cost of materials comes to only \$10 per linear foot of ramp. The volunteer group from First UMC, Slidell has discovered that a ramp for a house on a 6" slab costs approximately \$65 to build, while a ramp for a mobile home, usually 38" above the ground, would total \$400.

Think back to a time when your car was in the shop for several days and your mobility was limited. It is hard to imagine the inconvenience caused from

being wheelchair-bound and trapped in your house day in and day out. In every congregation around the conference,

there are members with the skills required to construct wheelchair ramps, which offer life-changing assistance to our "physically challenged" citizens. The need is there - to a greater degree than you could likely imagine. If your local church is interested in starting a similar program, inquire of a local rehabilitation center as to how many patients they have in need of a wheelchair ramp. For more information about how the Slidell wheelchair outreach became a reality, call First United Methodist Church at (504) 643-6437. We will be happy to share our experiences, and help get you started.

William "Sonny" Crawford is an active member of First UMC, Slidell and serves as coordinator of the Wheelchair Ramp Outreach. Crawford, along with other outreach volunteers, will be serving as a team leader for the next 'Takin' It to the Streets' event, where a projected 30 ramps will be built for homes in inner-city New Orleans. For more information on the event, slated for March 23-25, contact La. Volunteers in Mission at the Conference office.



On the road again

Mission in Motion is gearing up for 2001. The truck is stationed in the Baton Rouge District in February. March will find the 18-wheeler in the North Shore District, followed by the New Orleans District in April.

CONFERENCE CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

9-11	Senior High Retreat #2	La. Conference Center
10	Restorative Justice meeting	La. Conference Center
17	License to Preach School	La. Conference Center
16-17	Discerning the Call to Ministry	La. Conference Center
17-18	Louisiana Conference Cabinet Meeting	La. Conference Center

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NEWS,
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WITNESS OF LOUISIANA
CONFERENCE MINISTRIES

VOL. 2, NO. 4

BATON ROUGE, LA

February 23, 2001

Conference Center balances budget, retires more debt

The Louisiana Conference Center in Woodworth passed a milestone in 2000 by finishing with a balanced budget and retiring nearly \$80,000 of the operational debt.

According to Carl Rhoads, executive director of Administrative Services, the center has also managed to reduce the

\$3 million loan used to complete the building project to a balance of \$825,000 as of Dec. 31, 2000.

"As Louisiana's United Methodists celebrate Conference Center Sunday on Feb. 25, we pause to reflect on the ministry provided by this important facility. The center has given us a gathering

place in the central part of the state where we come together to work and to receive spiritual renewal," Rhoads said.

"The opportunities for advancing ministry are great," said Tom Robertson, executive director of the facility.

See Conference Center, page 6

Announcing
Annual Conference
This Year's Theme:

*Alive in the Spirit
Walking in the Way*

June 3-6, 2001
Centenary College
Shreveport

INSIDE



Igniting Ministry
training set for April /6



**Meet the Louisiana
United Methodist
Foundation /3**

- ☐ Lake Charles
District /4
- ☐ Baton Rouge
District /5



Photo by Joshua Lewis

Leroy Harvey, a member of First United Methodist Church in Jackson, stands with a 40-year-old replica of a train that served Jackson, Clinton and Port Hudson in the mid-nineteenth century. Today, the train runs on a five mile historical tour of the area.

Jackson resident rides the rails of history

BY BETTY BACKSTROM
EDITOR

Leroy Harvey, a member of First United Methodist Church, Jackson, has a passion for the "past." This civic-minded businessman is especially knowledgeable about the history of

Jackson, where he has resided since his birth. Harvey's enthusiasm has been the catalyst for a number of preservation projects in that city, like the Old Centenary Inn and Milbank, a restored antebellum mansion.

Perhaps the most unique initiative

to date is a depot and train run by the Old Hickory Railroad Association, an arm of the Republic of West Florida Historical Museum located near the depot. The train is a 40-year-old repro-

See History, page 6

Norris to offer keynote address at Annual Conference

Alfred L. Norris, currently serving as the resident bishop of the Houston Area Texas Annual Conference, will be the keynote speaker for the 31st session of the Louisiana Annual Conference in June. The theme for this year's conference, scheduled for June 3-6 at Centenary College, is "Alive in the Spirit, Walking in the Way."



Norris

Bishop Norris will speak at worship on Monday night, and on Monday and Tuesday during the daytime "praise and preaching" segments.

Born in Bogalusa in 1938, Bishop Norris is a

graduate of Dillard University in New Orleans and Gammon Theological Seminary in Atlanta. He is the recipient of four honorary degrees, two of which were awarded by his alma maters.

His peers in the Louisiana Conference elected him to five United Methodist

See Norris, page 3

ON THE JOURNEY

It's All in a Week's Work

In the air again! I have just made a quick trip out to eastern New Mexico to see my mother and I'm now in the sky between Midland and Dallas. I had a good visit with Mother and was pleased to see she is doing so well.

Kay and I drove to Dallas last Saturday (Feb. 3) where the College of Bishops for the South Central Jurisdiction was meeting. It was a productive meeting, centering on recruitment of persons for ordained ministry and retention of those who enter into the candidacy process. What we are experiencing in Louisiana is being felt in most conferences. There is a growing shortage of clergy to fill our churches. It is a need we must all pray about and seek for discernment as to how to begin to bring solutions.

It was a roller coaster week otherwise. On Sunday I received the news of the tragic death of Lamar White, son of Paul and Joanne White in Alexandria. Paul is the former Conference Lay Leader and Joanne is the head of the Conference task force on the Bishop's Initiative on Children and Poverty. Our heartfelt sympathy is extended to all their family.

Also on Sunday I received news of the terrible accident in which Kim Savoy, daughter of Ed and Rita Boyd sustained severe head trauma. Ed is the pastor of Asbury United Methodist Church in Lafayette. For two days Kim struggled valiantly for life, but the injuries were too severe for her to survive and on Wednesday, Feb. 7, she entered the church triumphant. Our sympathy is extended to Kim's husband, Kurt, her parents and other family members.

While in Dallas I was able to participate in a couple of days of Minister's Week at Perkins. Lectures were motivating, music was stimulating and fellowship was gratifying. We hosted a fun reception on Tuesday night for seminary students and spouses or significant others. That was a great time. We have some outstanding students from Louisiana in Perkins and our Conference will be blessed by their presence when they complete their education and join us back home. Now all we have to do is make sure they return home! More of that recruiting need I spoke of at the beginning.

On Wednesday night, three Superintendents and I went to Fort Worth to meet with United Methodist faculty and students at Brite Divinity School. We were impressed with the quality of both faculty and students and hope to begin a continual contact there as these students begin to look for a Conference to call home.

Then out to New Mexico on Thursday and now back to Dallas. I'll pick up my car at the airport, will drive to Shreveport to pick up Kay (who has been in Nashville this week being



Bishop William W. Hutchinson

introduced to the new hymnal supplement) and then on the Monroe where I'll preach on Sunday at First United Methodist Church, West Monroe.

It's now Monday night, Feb. 12, 2001 and we are back in Baton Rouge. The

services at West Monroe were exciting and it was moving to see the new Christian Life Center filled with worshipers as we consecrated the new building. From there we went to Rayville and I visited with the laity of the Monroe District and celebrated Holy Communion with them. Then this morning I met with the clergy of the Monroe District and we shared Holy Communion as well. Both the meeting with laity and the one with clergy made me very grateful to be in this Conference and built even greater expectations for the future. We truly are blessed with superb laity and clergy.

I got home tonight and learned that Patti Ezell's father had died. Patti is the spouse of Doug Ezell, District Superintendent of the Lake Charles District. The funeral will be tomorrow morning in Slidell. Our sympathy is extended to Patti and all her family.

Tomorrow I will share in an awareness training session on "Sexual Harassment in the Work Place," try and catch up on a week's work at my desk and be off to Broadmoor United Methodist here in Baton Rouge to meet with this district's laity tomorrow night and then with the clergy on Wednesday morning. And on it goes....

As they say, "It's all in a week's work." That's one thing that makes the office of the episcopacy so challenging and invigorating. It's never dull! And while some of it may appear to be superfluous, it isn't. It all works together for the growth of the Kingdom of God and to help make disciples for Jesus Christ. I can't think of a more joyous work than that which I am doing! Thanks to all of you for joining in the journey with me. Together under the leadership of the Holy Spirit I know we will make a difference! Won't it be exhilarating to watch all the Spirit has in store for us begin to unfold! I can hardly wait to see what it will be.

May God's blessings be with us as we journey together.

In Christ's Love,

Bill Hutchinson



Photo by Joshua Lewis

Kidding around

Children in the pre-school "Lunch Bunch" at Jefferson United Methodist Church in Baton Rouge get theatrical for the camera as they wait for their parents to pick them up. The pre-school now takes advantage of the church's new fellowship hall, a \$1 million facility completed in December.

Sojourner Truth nominations being accepted

Nominations for the Sojourner Truth Award given annually by the Louisiana Conference Commission on the Status and Role of Women (COSROW) are now being accepted. The award is presented during Annual Conference at the Commission's annual luncheon scheduled Tuesday, June 5 at Centenary College South Dining Hall.

The Sojourner Truth Award recognizes a woman who has made caring, Christian contributions to her church

and community in the spirit of Sojourner Truth, who broke barriers for many in the area of human rights. Letters of recommendation should describe the nominee's accomplishments and contributions that make her worthy of this honor and should include the nominee's address and telephone number. Nominations should be mailed by April 20 to: Sojourner Truth Award, c/o Rachel Scott, 405 Teak Dr., Shreveport, LA 71115.

STAINED GLASS



La. United Methodist Foundation grows to third largest in U.S.

There are a few new faces to be seen at the United Methodist Foundation of Louisiana—and a familiar name serving in an expanded capacity.

Rob Fairly, former director of development for the Foundation, was elevated to the position of vice president as of November.

"It is gratifying to know that Louisiana now has the third largest United Methodist Foundation in the nation. We continue to be blessed with the resources that allow the Foundation to fulfill our mission statement by 'strengthening and preserving current ministries, developing innovative ministries and meeting the needs of a diverse and rapidly changing society,'" said Fairly, adding that over \$360,000 in funding was distributed in 2000.

New to the staff is Selina McNeely who serves as senior accountant. Formerly with Our Lady of the Lake Foundation, McNeely works closely with Tonya Robertson, who was added to the staff as accounting assistant in October.

In addition to new staff, existing personnel continue to work together in serving the needs of individual churches and church institutions. Michael Reeves, Ph. D., has served as president and chief executive officer of the Foundation since last July. An ordained pastor, Dr. Reeves was previously vice president for Stewardship at the United Methodist Foundation of Texas, the largest United Methodist Foundation in the United States with over \$200 million in assets.

Marsha Chumbley serves as the Foundation's controller. Chumbley, a CPA, comes to the organization with over 10 years of experience in the accounting field.

Tracie Wharton, also a CPA, is the



The Louisiana United Methodist Foundation is (from left): Office Manager Gay McKnight, Accounting Assistant Tonya Robertson, Vice President Rob Fairly, Controller Marsha Chumbley, President Michael Reeves, Senior Clergy Advisor Ken Reed, Senior Accountant Selina McNeely, Director of Special Services Tracie Wharton.

Foundation's director of Special Services. Bringing 10 years of experience to the job, Wharton works directly with the areas of Foundation loans and grants.

Office Manager Gay McKnight, as

Fairly puts it, "keeps the place running." McKnight's knowledge of Methodism at the local church level has been helpful to the entire Foundation staff for the past two years.

Two part-time staff include Ken Reed, senior clergy advisor, and Warren Blakeman, North Louisiana representative. "Ken did a marvelous job as president of the Foundation for eight years. His wisdom and experience add depth to our current efforts," said Fairly. "Warren is serving on an interim basis as a liaison with Conference churches located in the northern areas of the state. We are hoping to expand this position to full-time within the next six months," he added.

The recent development of a Strategic Plan has provided a conceptual direction for the work of the Foundation. The document is designed as a basic business plan and will continue to be revised to remain a relevant resource.

Specific operational plans address a broad scope of services which include financial consultation, educational events, financial management, stewardship services, grants and loans.

"The Foundation is set up to help the local church answer every financial question. We can get churches started with annual and capital campaigns, in addition to looking at planned giving.

Grants are available for new church development, ministerial recruitment, and hands-on mission projects, among others. Seminarians can receive aid from loans, which do not have to be paid back if the person returns to serve within the Conference," Reeves said.

"Education events addressing financial issues, like developing and underwriting a church budget, provide practical information to local leaders," he added. The Foundation can also offer churches and institutions professional money management services relevant to the intended use of the funds.

IN MEMORIAM

Our prayers and condolences go to:

the family of **Rev. Al Trickett** (Retired, Baton Rouge District), on his death Thursday, Jan. 11.

Molly Belcher, Ruston District Secretary, on the death of her husband, Gene Saturday, Jan. 20.

Jan Minyard, wife of Rev. Billy Minyard; Bernice-Beech, Grove-Summerfield, on the death of her grandfather Jake Dampier Saturday Jan. 20.

Rev. Tracy MacKenzie, Wesley Foundation, MSU/Sulphur, Henning

Memorial UMC, on the death of her niece Adrienne Dantin Tuesday Jan. 30.

Paul and Joanne White, members of First United Methodist Church in Alexandria, on the death of their son Lamar Saturday Feb. 3.

Rev. Ed and Rita Ann Boyd; Asbury UMC, Lafayette, on the death of their daughter, Kimberly Savoy Wednesday, Feb. 7.

Patty Ezell, wife of Lake Charles District Superintendent Dr. Doug Ezell, on the death of her father, Bob McAfee Sunday Feb. 11.

UMM 'expedition' set for April

Larry Coppock, National Director of Scouting and Civic Youth Ministries for the General Commission on United Methodist Men, will speak at the Louisiana Conference UMM "Men and Youth Expedition", April 27-28 at the Conference Center in Woodworth.

Joining Coppock will be Rev. Tom Dolph, pastor at First United Methodist Church, Baker. His emphasis will be on ministering to youth in our congregations and communities.

All United Methodist Men are encouraged to attend, and to invite their fathers, sons, brothers, friends and pastors. Boy Scouts, Girls Scouts, Campfire Boys and Girls and 4-H members are invited to a special campfire on Friday evening, and a

panel discussion on Saturday afternoon featuring men and youth. Youth and youth workers from any church in the conference may attend the Saturday session, beginning at 9 a.m.

Registration is \$25. Admission for those invited from youth organizations is free, however a \$6 fee is required for lunch. Scouts, Campfire youth and 4-H guests may camp out for free.

Men attending the retreat may reserve rooms at the conference center by calling (318) 449-4500. The cost for overnight lodging and three meals is \$52 per person, double occupancy. Contact Ron Sarver at (337) 233-7696 or (337) 981-9401 to make reservations for Saturday lunch, if you are not staying at the conference center.

Norris, from page 1

General and Jurisdictional Conferences, beginning in 1976. Bishop Norris was appointed a delegate to six World Methodist Conferences. He has served on three general agencies of The United Methodist Church: General Board of Publication, General Board of Discipleship and the General Council on Finance and Administration. He serves as president of the latter, having been elected to that position in May 2000.

For several years Bishop Norris

chaired the Africa University Development Committee, helping to raise funds and support for the United Methodist institution in Zimbabwe. He is on the board of trustees of a number of institutions, including Southern Methodist University and Gammon Theological Seminary.

In addition to serving as pastor of four churches in New Orleans, Bishop Norris was a district superintendent, as well as director of recruitment and, later, presi-

dent of Gammon Theological seminary.

Experiencing the global nature of the church, his travels have taken him to Africa, Brazil, Argentina, the Philippines, South Korea, Israel and England since his election to the episcopacy.

Community service is one of Bishop Norris' primary concerns and his resume carries an extensive listing of community boards and agencies in Louisiana, Georgia and New Mexico on which he has served, including the first

president of the Louisiana Council for the Adoption of Minority Youth and president of the Greater New Orleans Federation of Churches.

Bishop Norris is married to the former Mackie L. Harper, who earned a doctoral degree from Emory University. They are the parents of Alfred, II and Angela Renee who are married to Lisa Robinson and Tyrone Johnson, respectively. Their grandsons are Alfred, III and Justin Douglass Norris.



District youth get fired up about 'Praise and Worship'

BY KAYLA SAUCIER
DCYM PRESIDENT

"Lake Charles district, we're here to say, 'We're the best in the USA'!"

Interesting opening line, don't you think? Youth in the Lake Charles district are excited about our program. These youth are thirsty for Christ and looking for him anywhere they can find him. But how can we meet their needs so that they can understand the glory of God and have fun at the same time? I have three words for you: "Praise and Worship!"

Last year, our district started doing District-wide "Praise and Worship" services. It was an exciting way to bring everyone together to worship the Lord. We decided to hold this three times a year. Last year the churches that hosted were Maplewood UMC, University UMC, and First UMC in Crowley. The music was provided by the youth with

bands such as So True, J-Walkin and Optimist Prime. Last year our speakers included Rev. Karen Davis, Diane Howe and Rev. Bob Hollis.

We recently had our first Praise and Worship of the year. Leesville UMC hosted us. The youth choir sang, and their puppet team Hands of Faith did an awesome job bringing the message to life. The speaker was Cassandra Bowmen who is their junior high and senior high Sunday school teacher. She did an awesome job relaying the word of God to the youth.

We also held a Praise and Worship service Jan. 7 at Warren UMC. The attendance ranges anywhere from 70 to 150. We have found this to be a crucial service in our district. So this year we are continuing to grow spiritually together as we journey down Gods path, because through Him we are all one and will always be united.



Youth perform at a recent 'Praise and Worship' event.



Wesley Foundation springs into 2001

The Wesley Foundation at McNeese State University seeks to be a visible and active presence of the church, the Body of Christ, to the greater McNeese community. Our motto is "Living Life with Christ at the Center."

Spring 2001 promises to be an active and exciting semester at McNeese. Weekly activities include the Wednesday "Lunch Bunch." Every Wednesday, students gather at lunch for a good "home-cooked" (by local UMWs) meal and discussion. There is a Thursday evening Bible Study led by Sarah Wynn and Claudia Gentry (of University UMC). And, of course, the building is available for study groups, band/jam sessions, pool playing, TV watching and, generally, "hanging out." This semester we will be participating in the World Vision's 30-Hour Famine and a camping weekend to the Sam Houston State Park.

For the summer, we have tentatively planned a back-packing/wilderness experience to Confrontation Point in Tennessee. This will be a week-long spiritual journey where we will confront God and our own limitations through a series of activities such as rock climbing, rappelling, caving, backpacking and white water rafting. The trip is set for May 12 - 19 and is open to any college-aged young adult. Our second summer trip will be a construction trip to help rebuild houses in El Salvador in the aftermath of their recent earthquake. This trip will be June 29 - July 6 and is under the direction of Buddy Frenzel and Tracy MacKenzie. If you are interested or know of someone who is interested in either (or both) of these trips, please contact Rev. Tracy L. MacKenzie, (337) 477-2191.

Once upon an Advent



Participants in the project included (front row) Lauren Johnson, Zane Strother, (back row) Chonnie Yarbrough, Children's Church Director Lillian Fenstermaker, Ashley Johnson, Kelly Johnson, Pastor Betty Northen and Rachel Johnson.

Oakdale kids benefit GRACE Camp

BY SUSAN MOORE
LAYLEADER, OAKDALE UMC

The children of the Oakdale United Methodist Church, children's church program, handcrafted 150 snowflakes during the Advent Season to benefit G.R.A.C.E. camp. They created the Christmas tree decorations out of craft sticks and glitter, and sold them to the congregation as memorials or honorariums. The names of the persons in which the snowflakes were purchased were printed on the backside.

Over \$150 was raised to benefit this mission project. G.R.A.C.E. Camp is for children of incarcerated inmates. The money will be used to supply scholarships to pay the children's registration fees. The camp is held across the conference at three different sites during the summer.

The Christmas tree in the fellowship hall was decorated with these snowflakes. On New Years Eve during

the 5th Sunday supper, the children and their director, Lillian Fenstermaker, presented the money raised to the pastor, Betty Northen. She in turn congratulated the children and their director on the success of this project.

The fundraiser began on Thanksgiving when Fenstermaker explained to the children the concept of G.R.A.C.E. camp. The church was in need of Christmas decorations for the fellowship hall tree, and the children decided that this would be the perfect project to make.

Send your church's stories to the District Communication Advisor:

Constance Handy
2706 Walden Dr.
Lake Charles, LA 70607
(337) 491-2331
handyjrr@aol.com

Volunteers help St. Paul UMC repair extensive termite damage

BY LYN SHEEHAN

DISTRICT COMMUNICATION ADVISOR

Louisiana's dreaded termites had no respect for the century old wood that was part of St. Paul United Methodist Church in Ethel.

The sanctuary floor was spongy as a team of church, district, and conference members gathered to plan a project to repair the old structure. It was feared that the building might have to be destroyed. The group decided to announce a work day to determine how severely the building had been damaged.

The call went out and United Methodists responded. On a recent Saturday, many workers were at the church ready to start the job. They removed pews, found the soft spots and removed some of the top layer of wood to prepare the area for inspection and repair. Billy Bridges, a member of Ingleside UMC in Baton Rouge, supervised the project. He is a veteran of numerous Volunteers in Mission projects.

After the sanctuary was cleared, Bridges determined that damage was not as extensive as originally feared. The floor was treated by professional exter-

minators and work continued.

While repairs were made, church member Eva Hausey coordinated a meal of barbecue and all the fixings for the workers.

Since the church meets on alternating weeks, the project was completed on consecutive Saturdays. New wood was put down over the entire sanctuary and overflow area.

"The flooring is complete," reported Rev. H. Louis Jones, pastor of St. Paul and Mt. Zion.

"We are now moving to the overflow area with new carpet. St. Paul would like to thank VIM, Mr. Bridges, and our neighbors."

He added, "The changes have sparked a stronger desire and determination to continue our efforts to rebuild and use the present structure for other ministries. Please, keep us in your prayers."

Baton Rouge District churches that were involved in the mission project included: St. Paul, Mt. Zion, Grand River, Jackson, Ethel, Ingleside, and Tunica. The congregation, also, was joined by Providence First Baptist Church, Church of God in Christ, and Mt. Pilgrim Baptist Church.



When termites damaged the floors of St. Paul United Methodist Church in Ethel, churches in the district responded to the call for help. Above, volunteers install new plywood.



Dancers Praising God

"Dancers Praising God" ministered through liturgical dance during the annual joint Homecoming service of the Ethel United Methodist Church and Ethel First Baptist Church. The nonprofit organization is directed by Natalie Bass and is composed of Christians from different dance schools in Lafayette. The girls presented a routine of dances during the service and afterwards at the dinner on the grounds. Adapting their choreography to the lawn setting, the girls performed to more songs including "Our God is an Awesome God." Beautiful weather added to the celebration which was attended by approximately 150 people. It is an Ethel tradition for the two churches to alternate hosting the event and celebrate Homecoming together.

Bradford to facilitate class leader training

Noted author Grace Bradford will be the facilitator of a Class Leader Training Session held by St. Mark United Methodist Church in Baton Rouge on Friday, May 11, from 6:00 - 8:30 p.m. and Saturday, May 12, from 8:30 a.m. - noon.

Bradford is a member and class leader of Asbury Church in Washington, D.C.

She is the author of "Guide for Class Leaders (A model for Christian Formation)" and the editor of the Covenant Discipleship Quarterly, a publication for people in covenant discipleship groups.

A registration fee of \$10 will be charged. St. Mark UMC is located at 1445 North 39th Street in Baton Rouge. For more information, call the church at (225) 357-6150.

Visual enhancement workshop offered

"Visual Enhancement of Worship Space" will be hosted by St. Mark United Methodist Church in Baton Rouge April 28 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

The workshop will be facilitated by Letty Strawbridge and Gladys Ford.

A registration fee will cover materials and lunch. For more information, call the church at (225) 357-6150.

MIM trailer rolls into BR District

The Mission In Motion trailer rolled into Baton Rouge District for January 28 through March 2 as the 2001 mission initiative began a new year.

Its current host is First UMC, Gonzales which is located at 224 West Constitution St. The trailer will remain in Gonzales through March 2.

Henry and Mary Ann Burton are the project coordinators for Baton Rouge District. Mary Ann said, "We have not depleted our supply of flood buckets. At this time there are pressing needs for other kinds of kits."

Those needed include: health kits, school kits, layettes, and sewing kits.

"Remember it is important that directions be followed exactly," Mary Ann said. "Please include all items and refrain from adding items that are not on the list. Though extra items are given with the best intentions, they often render a kit unusable and must be removed."

All items included in kits must be new. Kit information is available from the district office and from the Burtons at (225) 654-7986.

Food stocks are LOW

at the **UM Mission Center** at 4643 Winbourne in Baton Rouge. Churches are asked to fulfill 2000 pledges and to select representatives for 2001. **Recommended foods include cereal, canned fruit and canned tomato products.**

Send your church's stories to the District Communication Advisor:

Lyn Sheehan
P.O. Box 350
Jackson, LA 70748
(225) 634-7810
lyn_sheehan@hotmail.com

History, *from page 1*

duction of a late 1850's steam engine porter, typical of those used during the Civil War. The depot is actually an old house built in the railroad style which was renovated to appear like a train station of that era.

"The Old Hickory Railroad is reminiscent of the now defunct Clinton/Port Hudson Railroad which had a spur to Jackson. The original railroad, completed in 1839, was very important to the local economy because it was used to transport cotton and lumber. Even before its completion, service began with mules pulling cars filled with cotton because they could not afford a locomotive right away," said Harvey.

A visit to Old Hickory Depot features historical displays and railroad memorabilia as well as a ride on the steam engine train, which is now fueled by propane instead of coal. The museum is expanding to include a cotton gin, circa 1885, and a gristmill from the 1920's.

Jackson is also the original home of Centenary College, now located in Shreveport. First opened as the College of Louisiana in 1826, the school faced declining enrollment after less than 20 years of operation. The Methodist/Episcopal-operated Centenary College at Brandon Springs, Miss. moved to the vacant Louisiana campus in 1845.

"Everyone knew the importance of education in those days; the opportunity to receive a degree was truly appreciated. Although Centenary College closed during the Civil War, it is recorded that classes in area schools would be halted during a skirmish and resumed as soon as the conflict was over," said Harvey.

Although some of the buildings were torn down for their bricks during the Depression, visitors to the old Centenary College site may tour a restored dormitory and a professor's residence which are original to the school.

Both the old school campus and the railroad will be visited by members of the Centenary College Choir as the group swings through Louisiana on its annual performance tour. Right after their visit to Jackson, the choir heads for Clinton UMC on March 24 for a 7 p.m. performance of their program.

Also of note in Jackson is the world premier performance of an original Easter oratorio at 7 p.m. on March 22 in the Republic of West Florida Museum Pavilion.



A dormitory is one of two original structures remaining on the old Centenary College campus in Jackson. Other buildings were destroyed for materials during the Depression.

Logos, written and composed by Dr. William Robert Boyd, D.M.A., will be performed by area orchestra musicians, as well as the Nicholls State University Choir and solo artists under the direction of Dr. Kenneth S. Klaus. Boyd, who is currently an educator and United Methodist pastor, will conduct the production. Tickets are \$5 each; additional information and/or reservations may be obtained by calling (225) 634-7397 in Jackson or (225) 763-9977 in Baton Rouge.

The Old Hickory Railroad runs every Saturday and Sunday at 2 p.m., weather permitting. Tickets are \$3 for children 12 and under; \$7 for adults; and \$5 for senior citizens aged 62 and above. The train is available for group rides on weekdays, by appointment. The cost of the ticket includes same-day admission to any state commemorative area, including Centenary State Historic Site and Port Hudson State Historic Site.

Igniting Ministry training offers churches new evangelical tools

Louisiana Conference churches will receive a promotional boost this fall from Igniting Ministry, a media campaign of The United Methodist Church. The initiative offers local churches new evangelism tools, highlighted by a series of powerful national cable network commercials designed to raise positive awareness about the church. This unique program is a coordinated effort offering resources to assist local churches in strengthening their welcoming and marketing skills.

Igniting Ministry Regional Training, sponsored by United Methodist Communications, provides churches with comprehensive planning kits and practical "how-to" guides on enhancing invitational skills.

All churches are invited to send a team (pastor and at least one lay person) to the training coordinated by Dr. Rena Yocom, Director of Ministries and Missions, at the Louisiana Conference Center in Woodworth on April 24, from 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

The registration fee of \$35 per church covers the cost of the Igniting Ministry planning kit.

Lunch is \$5 per person. Please enclose registration fee with the form below. For more information, call (225) 346-1646

Send registration form by deadline of April 10, 2001 to Betty Backstrom, 527 North Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70802. Check should be made out to Louisiana Annual Conference.



Igniting Ministry Regional Training

Registration Form

April 24, 2001

La. Methodist Conference Center in Woodworth

9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Church _____ District _____

Name (s) _____

Church Address _____

City/Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Conference Center, *from page 1*

"There are many ways for everyone in the conference to be connected. This facility is theirs, and we need to be proud of what we have here," Robertson added. He also noted that John Gizedich, food service manager, deserves a lot of credit for bringing operational food service costs under control. "John has been able to bring expenditures in line while maintaining a consistent quality of food that impresses our guests," said Robertson.

Adding to the good news, the center's board of trustees recently approved a landscape master plan, designed by Reich and Associates of Baton Rouge. Dr. Robert Reich, a member of University UMC, initiated the plan through the guidance of the United Methodist Foundation of Louisiana.

The plan, which will be formally unveiled at annual conference, focuses on trail development, replanting of native plants, and other amenities that will enhance the conference center grounds. A few of those components include a bridge across the lake, a family pavilion, and an amphitheater. The initiative will encourage a wide range of participation by volunteer, and is expected to take several years to be fully realized.

Workshop teaches teachers of children

"Learn to Teach: Teach to Learn" workshops, sponsored by Cokesbury, will be held March 22 from 6-8 p.m. at the Conference Center and March 24 from 9:30 a.m.-noon at First United Methodist Church in Baton Rouge.

The training is designed for teachers and leaders of children, with dozens of practical ideas for use in the local church.

The workshop will present classroom management suggestions, reproducible

teaching aids, and activities to motivate children. A session on worship and reflection will help adult volunteers discover their spiritual type and find inspiration for their teaching.

A registration fee of \$20 includes training materials and a 96-page workbook full of teaching ministry tips. For more details or to register, call Curric-U-Phone at (800) 251-8591, email Kramsey@umpublishing.org, or visit our website at www.ilearntoteach.com.

Director of Christian Education

Christ United Methodist Church in Shreveport is seeking a director of Christian Education. A college degree in Christian Education or another church-related field is preferred. Salary and benefits are \$28,000-\$32,000.

Please send resume to 1204 Crabapple Dr., Shreveport, LA, or fax to (318) 686-2578. For additional information, call (318) 686-2553.

Three camping centers prepare for season ahead

Each of the three Louisiana conference camping locations are gearing up for this year's summer camping season by hosting Volunteers in Mission Days on March 23-24.

Participants can revisit the campsite of their youth, or get acquainted with a center for the first time as they spend the weekend painting, doing roof repair, helping with yard work, or working on small construction projects at some sites. This mission coincides with Camping Sunday on March 25.

Caney Conference Center in Minden, Uskichitto Retreat Center in LeBlanc, and Camp Istrouma in Greenwell Springs continue to offer excellent camping programs which provide unique spiritual experiences to our children and youth.

Each camp is asking for volunteer help during a one or two-day mission experience, which is designed for adults and/or for church youth groups with adult chaperones. Participants may choose the camp at which to offer assistance.

Registration may be handled by calling the camp directly, or filling out a registration form and sending it to that camp. This opportunity is being offered

for "donations only" to cover meals and lodging costs.

Participants should bring sleeping bags, towels, personal toilet items and a flashlight if choosing one of the overnight missions. Two weeks prior to the date of the mission, volunteers should call the camp to see what kinds of tools will be helpful for the projects scheduled.

Registration forms may be obtained at the conference office, and interested persons should contact the camps as follows:

Caney Conference Center
March 23-24
Minden, La.
Contact: Terral T. Lowe
(318) 377-6756

Uskichitto Retreat Center
March 23-24
Leblanc, La.
Contact: Sammie King
(337) 738-5259

Camp Istrouma
March 24
Greenwell Springs, La.
Contact: LaMarylis Cotton
(225) 296-0668



Children help celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Uskichitto Retreat Center.

Ask and you shall receive!

If you want the latest news, opportunities, and witness in Louisiana United Methodism, just ask for La.NOW! and you will receive it. If you already subscribe, pass the form along to a friend and spread the Good News!

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Enclosed is my check for

☐ \$15 (One year)

☐ \$25 (Two years)

Please mail to: Subscriptions, La.NOW!, 527 North Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA, 70802

Forums highlight critical issue of water use in La. communities

A series of interchurch forums on our state's water resources continues with a workshop to be held on March 13 6:30 p.m.-8 p.m. in the sanctuary of University UMC in Baton Rouge.

"Most people are not aware of some of the alarming situations that threaten the integrity of our water supplies. Our freshwater aquifers are being depleted. We battle contamination of ground and surface waters, which serve as a source of drinking water for some areas. Just as alarming is the salinization of fresh water sources, which makes it all the more important to preserve and conserve our resources," said Sarah Schoeffler, chair of the Lafayette workshop committee.

Shawn Anglim, United Campus Minister to LSU, chairs the local workshop committee for the March 13 forum in Baton Rouge.

"It is hoped that these forums will educate people, and effectively call them to the biblical ethic of stewardship in protecting Louisiana's abundant water system, with which God has blessed us," Anglim said.

The forums began on January 11 at Asbury United Methodist Church in Lafayette. Over 150 people attended the workshop, which was the first in a series of Louisiana Community Waters Forums sponsored by the Louisiana Interchurch Conference. These informational forums are an outgrowth of the LIC's board resolution, passed in September, in support of protecting and restoring Louisiana's community waters.

During the forum, Brad Hanson, with the Louisiana Geological Survey with LSU, expressed serious concerns about the depletion of the state's aquifers. "The

water levels for the Chicot Aquifer are in a steady decline.

Think of an aquifer as a great big bathtub. Overuse is causing steady depletion of the water source. The water levels are recoverable, but it will take cutting back, or stopping, the pumping altogether. The largest consumer of water is the agricultural industry for irrigation, primarily for rice crops. The second largest user is industry. So the tough question is, 'Who is going to cut back, and who makes those decisions?'" explained Hanson.

Hanson added that our waters are a legacy we need to leave for our children. "We don't inherit the world from our parents, we borrow it from our children."

In addition to the presentation of scientific issues by several experts, a panel of governmental officials addressed the fact that Louisiana is the only state in the which does not have a permitting process for drilling wells. Although legislation is pending, it is being contested.

In addition to the Lafayette workshop, two other water forums have been held at First UMC in Monroe and Our Lady of the Rosary in LaRose.

"Although these water issues affect the entire state, they are particular to their location," Anglim said.

"The Chicot Aquifer supplies the Lafayette area, and has been dropping by 1-2 feet per year. The Baton Rouge area is served by eight aquifers, which have been dropping 6-8 feet per year. Two had to be shut down temporarily because of salt water intrusion. These forums will make us aware that we must be intentional about the use of our water," said Anglim.

Louisiana Conference *NOW!*

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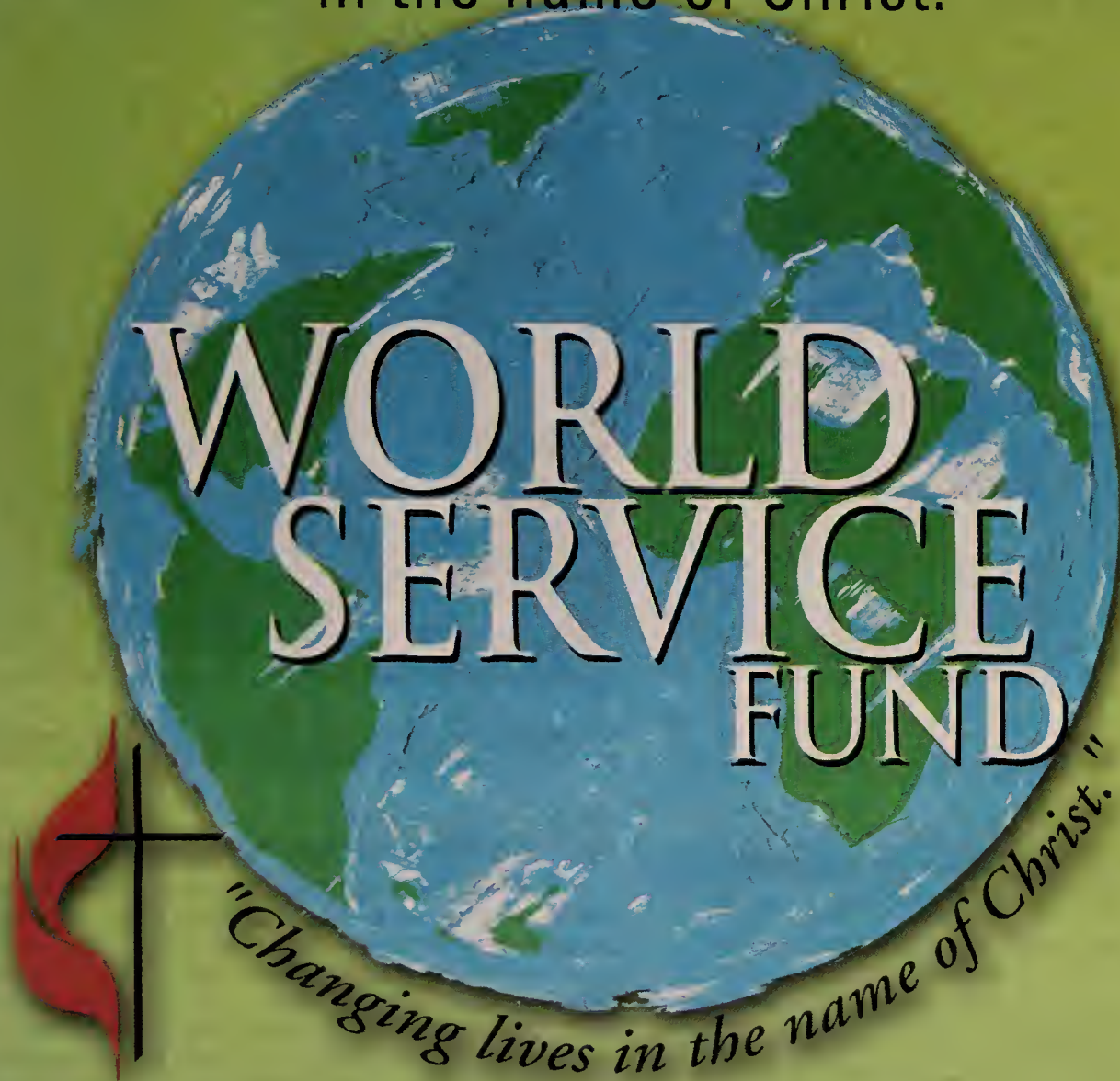
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—New Address—

On the Web

You can find the Louisiana Annual
Conference on the Internet at
<http://www.la-umc.org>

Through World Service, you become a partner in ministry.
You reach out in love and compassion
in the name of Christ.



Through this apportionment, United Methodist churches:

- ▣ undergird a network of missionaries and others who serve in the name of Christ and The United Methodist Church around the world;
- ▣ strengthen evangelism efforts, stimulate church growth, expand Bible studies and nurture spiritual development;
- ▣ support specific local church work with children, youth, singles, students, persons who are mentally and physically challenged, adults and older persons;
- ▣ enrich our congregational life with worship, retreat and camping resources, leader training and stewardship development;
- ▣ provide leadership and coordination for denominational ministry with youth;
- ▣ continue nearly 200 years of commitment to quality college and graduate education;
- ▣ certify United Methodist professional Christian educators, communicators and musicians;
- ▣ assure United Methodists speak and work to help build a more ethical, just and humane world;
- ▣ continue a proud tradition of cooperation and dialogue with other faith traditions through interdenominational and ecumenical work;
- ▣ give our denomination a presence in the mass media and make new communications technologies accessible to the church; and
- ▣ express our commitment to God's reign through ministries of peace and justice, and efforts to build a church and a society truly inclusive of all persons regardless of race, ethnicity, gender or handicapping condition.

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**THE UNITED
METHODIST
CHURCH**

VOL. 2, NO. 5

BATON ROUGE, LA

March 9, 2001

La. United Methodist youth big on spiritual life, giving

BY BETTY BACKSTROM
EDITOR

"When I think about youth ministry and how it has evolved over the years, it seems that the youth of today are really desirous of a spiritual life. They want to know what it means to be a servant leader," said Carolyn Dove, director of

Youth Ministry for the Louisiana Conference. "More and more youth want to participate in conference events. I think that our youth understand church connectionalism more clearly than many adults, and this creates opportunities for them," said Dove, who has worked with youth for nearly 20 years.

She attributes part of the rise in enthusiasm to the characteristics of the generation. "Those who are 18 years of age or younger are known as 'millennials' by demographers. This group is more like the 'G.I.s' or their grandpar-

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Announcing
Annual Conference
This Year's Theme:

*Alive in the Spirit
Walking in the Way*

June 3-6, 2001
Centenary College
Shreveport

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MINISTRY**

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See Youth, page 3



Nanci Youngblood joined a team of United Methodists from around the country for an "Encounter with Christ in Latin America and the Caribbean." Above, she enjoys fellowship with Eloidia and Martha after worship in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala.

"Bienvenidos a esta tierra santa..."

La. church leader 'encounters' Christ in Latin America

BY Nanci YOUNGBLOOD

"Bienvenidos a esta tierra santa," said Bishop Isaias Gutierrez of Guatemala. "Welcome to this holy ground." These words greeted our 32-member study team for "Encounter with Christ in Latin America and the Caribbean," a permanent fund of the General Board of Global Ministries, as we arrived for our fact-finding tour on Jan. 27.

Business people, educators, mission volunteers, pastors, missionaries and staff members from annual conferences across the United States spent nine days traveling through Guatemala and Mexico learning about some of the vital ministries supported by "Encounter with Christ."

In Guatemala, our study team visited Methodist churches and projects in Chichicastenango, Quetzaltenango, and Mazatenango; greeted a Volunteers in Mission team from Iowa and Wisconsin; and discussed needs with the national church leadership. In Mexico, we worshipped at Gante Church and visited the Gonzalo Baez Comargo Seminary and the

See Guatemala, page 8

Annual Conference offering to benefit Russia Initiative

Louisiana United Methodists will have an opportunity to support Russian ministries through an evening offering to be received Monday, June 4 during Annual Conference in Shreveport. The offering will specifically benefit four Russian churches and a Methodist seminary in Moscow.

The efforts of the Louisiana Annual

Conference Russia Initiative Task Force have established a large cluster of churches in the Conference that form the "supportive churches" of First UMC, Ekaterinburg and First UMC, Pervouralsk.

Construction is nearly completed on a new sanctuary for the Ekaterinburg church, pastored by Rev. Olga Kotsuba.

Kotsuba visited churches around the Louisiana Conference in February and spoke at a spiritual renewal retreat for persons under appointment in Woodworth. Plans for a Louisiana delegation—led by Bishop William Hutchinson—to attend the June 17 dedication of the Russian sanctuary are currently in formation.

ON THE JOURNEY

Mardi Gras and Ash Wednesday

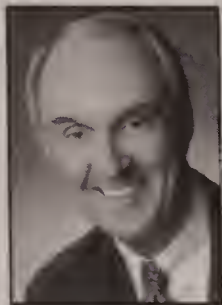
I'm an initiate! As of Tuesday afternoon, February 27, I was almost a veteran — of Mardi Gras that is!

Being a desert rat from New Mexico and Kay being an Okie from Woodward, we had never experienced Mardi Gras before this year. Oh, we had hosted Pancake Suppers at the church for the last several years and thought we were really doing something big. One year a staff member even had access to four strands of "real Mardi Gras beads" (which meant nothing to any of us!) and we passed them out among the four staff members who were on the front serving line for the pancakes! We thought we were hot stuff with that one strand of beads around our necks. New Orleans had nothing on Albuquerque! Little did we know!!! When we got home Tuesday night Kay weighed the beads we had snagged. Fifteen pounds worth!

My personal thanks to Rayne Memorial United Methodist Church and Don Cottrill who were superb hosts for the Mardi Gras gathering. Many of the clergy and spouses met at Don's historic parsonage for red beans and rice on Lundi Gras and then went across the street to watch the night parades. It wasn't long before we were fully into it! We were quickly yelling, "Throw me something, Mister" with the best of them. Kay and I began to hoard the beads and before long our necks hurt from the weight of the glittery plastic jewels. But that didn't deter us. We kept yelling, catching and having a great time.

On Tuesday morning we got up at 5:00 am to head back to New Orleans for the big day. Joining friends and colleagues at Rayne Memorial once again, we began to eat our way through the day and limbered up our throats for more yelling. When Rex finally rolled (see how educated I am becoming in the lingo!) we were ready. It was a regular Methodist revival meeting. Hands in the air in praise (please spare me the lightning strike for sacrilege) we all began to yell out our witness. It sounded strangely familiar from the night before — "Throw me something, Mister!" By the end of the day we were covered with beads, had enough plastic cups to open a store, a football or two, a Frisbee, some stuffed animals and other trinkets too numerous to mention. It was another great day! What fun! I'm sure it was a little more raucous in other parts of town, but our point of gathering was just plain fun! Now I know why it is seen and experienced as such a party.

Ash Wednesday was markedly different. Somber services of penance are the appropriate follow-up to such a day of feasting and frolic. From feasting to fasting literally overnight. I think it is the Ecclesiastes theology at



Bishop William W. Hutchinson

work. There is a time for Mardi Gras and a time for Ash Wednesday. There is a time for feasting and a time for fasting. There is a time for raucous fun and there is a time for reflective introspection.

There is a time for every season under heaven. Each brings its own good and perfect gift to our lives and in the fullness we are made whole.

In a serious conversation today with one who has just lost a loved one, we talked about the ebb and flow of life. There is the moment of stark loss

"Thank you God for Mardi Gras and for Ash Wednesday, for the fun we've had and for the time to remember we are dust and to dust we shall return."

and extreme distress when one we love is taken in death. And then there is the moment of joyous remembrance as we celebrate the person's life and personality that brought us such fulfilled happiness. All of it together is what makes us a whole person.

That's the beauty of God. There is every side. Nothing is left out. No one is left out. There is a time for all and for all things. Praise God from whom ALL blessings flow!

The members of the appointive cabinet and I desire your prayers in the days ahead. We are beginning the sacred work of making appointments for the coming year. In that anointed calling we find celebration and we find sorrow. In the appointments we will find those who are pleased with what has happened and those who are distressed by what has happened. We will find those who know themselves to be blessed and those who believe themselves to be cursed. And yet, in the perceived blessing is sometimes a looming disappointment. In the perceived curse is sometimes a budding joy. God is in it all if we but recognize God's presence. There is a time for everything! Please pray that God's guidance prevails and God's will is done.

When we reach the end of our life and look back may we be able to say, "Thank you God for Mardi Gras and for Ash Wednesday, for the fun we've had and for the time to remember we are dust and to dust we shall return. Thank you God for it all and for making me a whole person!" That's the desired completion of the journey. What a blessing to be sharing it with you....

Bill Hutchinson



Photo by David Normand, *The News*

Living the dream

The front line leads at least 50 marchers from the L. M. Lockhart Center on Rodeo Drive to Roberts United Methodist Church in Denham Springs for a service held in memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Pictured (from left) are Kay Hutchinson; Bishop William Hutchinson, Rev. Alonzo J. Campbell, pastor at Roberts UMC; Dr. Keith Cowart, associate pastor at Midway Baptist Church; Elder Adolphus White, pastor at First Church of God in Christ and city Councilman Arthur Perkins.

Retreat to focus on Christian education

The Louisiana Christian Educators Fellowship will hold a spring retreat at the Louisiana Conference Center in Woodworth on March 15 from noon-7:30 p.m.

Retreat leader will be Rev. Sharon Rubey, who serves at the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry in the Division of Ordained Ministry as Director of Conference Relations for the Section of Deacons and Diaconal Ministry.

The retreat will begin with registration and lunch. The afternoon offers

inspirational topic sessions and a business meeting. The event ends with dinner and closing worship.

Registration for the CEF retreat is \$30. Contact Pam Crews (318) 424-7771 or Janet Cavalier (504) 393-7183 to check availability of space.

Registration should be sent to Rev. Doug Davis, P. O. Box 8061, Alexandria, LA, 71306

Those wishing to stay the evening may make room reservations by calling Cathy Wimberly at the conference center, (318) 449-4500.

STAINED GLASS



"I seriously question the sanity of doing a sermon on March Madness."

Youth, *from page 1*

ent's generation, than any other age level. They tend to be philanthropic, desirous of a spiritual life, and wanting to serve their fellow man. This group is really searching for meaning in their life and looking to the church to give them opportunities for learning and serving. They are asking the church to accept them," said Dove.

It is impressive to note that over \$1,000 was raised for the Youth Service Fund at each of the last two senior high retreats held at the Conference Center in Woodworth.

"Those contributions were made out of the youth's own pockets. This generation wants to be generous, and to feel that they make a difference," said Dove.

Youth volunteerism abounds, often in creatively modern ways. Rachel Nederveld, a member of the Asbury UMC, Lafayette youth group, produces a web page called Hungry for Music, which lists the names of Christian bands and how to access their music.

Breanna Betts, vice president of UMYF at St. Francisville UMC, attended the International Youth Conference for Mission in 1999. She subsequently was invited to be a mission workshop leader at the National Gathering of Teens and College/University Women held in St. Charles, Illinois last December.

United Methodist youth volunteerism can begin with an idea from another denomination. Borrowing the project concept from Spring Valley Presbyterian Church in Columbia, SC, churches throughout the conference celebrated Souper Bowl Sunday on Jan. 28, when youth encouraged worshipers to donate cans of soup that were donated to the needy.

The local church youth group (UMYF) is the nuclear unit that forms the heart of youth ministry. Each local church has three youth and one adult that can represent that church on the district level (DCYM). The adult does not have to be the youth director. These volunteers make a commitment to attend DCYM meetings and events, which are geared to encourage service and fellowship in each district. One such event was a blanket drive organized by youth in the New Orleans district, with the items being distributed to homeless shelters.

Four or five persons are elected from each district to serve at the Conference level (CCYM). The Conference Council on Youth Ministry plans, coordinates and executes conference-level programming such as youth retreats, Fall Convocation and DCYM training. The CCYM also promotes jurisdictional and national events to youth throughout the conference.

Jason Cohen, who is active in the youth program at Asbury UMC, Lafayette said, "The retreats have been the best experiences of my life. It is great to see the love everyone shares."

This year's South Central Jurisdictional youth event is SpiLaRa 2001, to be held July 2-6 at the University of Oklahoma. "This spiritual life rally will include workshops, worship and special events such as a Battle of the Bands and a talent review," said Jared Williams of the Monroe district, who is serving as the youth convener for SpiLaRa.

Mission opportunities are a key part of a youth program. Every summer finds hundreds of youth working at home and abroad through initiatives like Volunteers in Mission, U. M. Army and UMCOR.



Skits are a big part of activities at United Methodist youth retreats. Top: Jeffery Jordan and Jared Williams go country for their presentation at this year's Senior High Retreat at the Conference Center in Woodworth. Above: "Pigs" Adam Clarke, Marcia Clark and Jason Cohen give it their best oink for Kristen Schlessman in a new spin on the Prodigal Son story. Left: Kyle McCastle, center, a member of Asbury UMC in Lafayette, leads his band "Torn" in a performance at the retreat. All of the band members are students at Louisiana Tech.



Response Magazine features article by La. pastor

In their November issue, Response magazine published an article on Jewish/Christian relations by Rev. Erica R. Jenkins, pastor of St. Peter UMC, Jeanerette and Mallalieu UMC, St. Martinville. The article, "Jewish Christian Dialogue Today," focused on the importance of expanding discussions between the two faiths as believers struggle "to heal years of pain, fear and misunderstanding."

In the article, Jenkins quotes "Building New Bridges in Hope," a statement of The United Methodist Church on Christian-Jewish relations, with the following: "God, whom Christians have come to know in Jesus Christ, has created all human beings in the divine image

... God desires that all people live in love and righteousness."

Jenkins referred to "The Ten Points of Seelisberg," established in 1946 at the first international meeting of Christians and Jews. "Remember that one God speaks through the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament" is just one of the highlighted steps toward renewal of relations.

The article ends with eight recommended steps to increase mutual exploration of common ground between the two faiths. A few of those steps include: "Organize interfaith pulpit exchanges;" "Be host to joint Bible Studies on a book from the Hebrew Scripture;" and "Plan musical events with music from both faith communities."



Jenkins

Executive director sought

The Dulac Community Center is seeking an Executive Director to plan, direct and coordinate development and administration of all programs and services; management of personnel, finances, property maintenance and fund raising.

Qualifications: Degree in Social Sciences or Business Management preferred or equivalent experience in personnel management; commitment to mission and outreach of The United Methodist Church.

Send resumes by March 14 to :
Dulac Community Center, P. O. Box
349, Dulac, LA 70353, Fax: (504) 563-7826



Oak Grove laity give Children's Home 'sweet' heart deal

A group of United Methodists from Oak Grove UMC have helped make the lives of youth at the Methodist Children's Home in Ruston a little sweeter.

John Rober McIntosh, a sweet potato farmer from Oak Grove, overheard the packers at Southern Produce Distributors saying they were loading sweet potatoes for the Children's Home in Monroe. Robert asked if they had ever given sweet potatoes to the Children's Home in Ruston.

"No, but we are willing," was the reply.

When word reached Rev. Joe Hoover, pastor of the Oak Grove UMC, arrangements were made to make a sweet potato run.

Forty boxes of sweet potatoes were delivered to Ruston by church member Lindy Lingo.

Terrel DeVile, president of the Ruston Children's Home and Director of Development Paul Sabin were present to receive the 1,000-pound-plus shipment of Macon Ridge Sweet Potatoes.

"This project demonstrates that the laity of this church are always looking for needs within the community and are able to develop mission projects that

address those needs," Hoover said.

Hoover said he was also impressed by McIntosh's willingness to give his valuable time to the project.

"It took a half day to travel and deliver the sweet potatoes to the home. To have a lay person take that much time away from his farming is impressive," Hoover explained.

The potatoes were eaten by children during regular meals at the home.

"When I checked, they said they 'tasted real good,'" Hoover said.

The sweet potato delivery project is only one of many mission projects that members of the Oak Grove church have initiated in recent years, according to Hoover.

Church members also make regular monthly runs to the Northeast Louisiana Food Bank in Monroe to pick up food boxes that are distributed to the elderly and other needy persons in the community.

A team from the church will also be taking a mission trip to Bennington, Okla., later this year to conduct Bible School sessions for the church there. The church has been without a pastor for the past 18 months.



Terrel DeVile, president of the Louisiana Methodist Children's Home in Ruston, and Rev. Joe Hoover, pastor at Oak Grove UMC, stand with some of the half ton of sweet potatoes the home recently received thanks to the efforts of Oak Grove church members.

First UMC, Monroe, leads ecumenical service to support mayor

"I actually felt God's spirit move through the people during the service," remarked one of nearly 1,000 worshippers who attended an interdenominational prayer service for Monroe Mayor Melvin Rambin at First United Methodist Church, Monroe, Jan. 28.

The service, sponsored by Community Prayer Partners, a group of churches in Monroe and West Monroe, was held to offer prayer for Rambin, who has cancer.

Rambin announced his liver cancer diagnosis in November. Since then the

cancer has been detected in his lungs and lymph nodes.

A desire to pray for Rambin and his wife, Julia, united ministers and lay persons from across denominational lines in a tremendous showing of Christian unity and support.

It was an event that First UMC Senior Pastor Larry Stafford called, "The most significant event to occur in the life of the church." Stafford officiated at the service.

Dozens of church members mobilized to make the event a success and

served as a visible witness to the ecumenical nature of United Methodism.

Church members served as greeters and ushers and helped set chairs in the church sanctuary to accommodate those who attended the prayer service.

Music during the service also reflected the diversity and inclusiveness of the event.

Prayer service participants joined in songs of praise led by the First UMC contemporary worship music team "Sound of Faith" and also sang a selection of traditional Christian hymns led

by the church's chancel choir.

Rambin's personal testimony highlighted the service. He welcomed those present to what he described as "the Super Bowl of prayer."

"I cannot express to the community what this example has meant to my family," Rambin said. "If all of this illness does anything to bring this city together, then boy, are we honored."

Faith in God has helped him deal with his cancer and accept his fate, Rambin said. "I am very comfortable in the hands of the Lord," he said.

Monroe City Councilman Jamie Mayo also spoke briefly saying that the ceremony allowed members of the community to come together without religious or political motives.

Those in attendance were invited by Stafford to pray for the Rambin family "in the way you are used to praying."

"You can pray silently or as loudly and boldly as you wish," Stafford said.

The service concluded as Rambin and his wife sat in chairs in the front of the sanctuary.

A group of about 18 ministers representing a variety of community religious denominations gathered around the couple, placed their hands on them, and prayed.

In the stillness, words of prayer and soft sobs could also be heard from throughout the sanctuary.



Youth and adults from the Monroe District who attended the La. Conference Senior High Retreat Feb. 9-11 donated the greatest amount of money to Youth Service Fund. Of the \$1,100 that was collected during the weekend, the Monroe District contributed \$347. Churches represented were Columbia, Faith, Mangum, Winnsboro, First West Monroe and First Monroe UMCs.

Send your church's stories to the District Communication Advisor:

Rev. Bill Monroe
3900 Loop Rd.
Monroe, LA 71201
(318) 325-7335

DMT emphasizes leadership

The New Orleans District Ministry Team and Mt. Zion United Methodist Church held Church Leadership Training seminars in January.

On Jan. 20, the New Orleans District Ministry Team sponsored a Church Leadership Training seminar at Gretna UMC in an effort to answer the needs of District churches. The half-day training featured sessions geared toward Administrative Council, Finance, Lay Leaders, Stewardship, Trustee, Pastor-Parish Relations and Worship.

The training began with an opening devotional and ended with a closing service with Holy Communion led by District Superintendent Rev. Freddie Henderson.

Mount Zion UMC in New Orleans held the inaugural gathering of its Annual Leadership Development Institute. LDI 2001 was planned to empower its members with information and to equip them with tools for effective and successful leadership roles in the church.

"I believe God is calling the family of Mount Zion to reach people through excellence in ministry," said Rev. Victor T. McCullough, pastor. The seminar provided sessions on preparing spiritually for ministry, developing systems for reaching people and making a difference, and on money with a mission. The day-long seminar concluded with a time of commitment for its membership.



Rev. Josh Milliron of Aldersgate UMC, Slidell, leads a seminar entitled, "Developing Systems for Reaching People and Making a Difference" at Mount Zion United Methodist Church in New Orleans. The presentation was part of the church's Leadership Development Institute 2001.



Carrollton bears 'signs' of ecumenism

BY HILDA POPPELL

If you pass by Carrollton United Methodist Church at 921 South Carrollton Avenue in New Orleans, you will find many signs indicating that different religious affiliations are meeting at that location. They are Christ Presbyterian Church (a congregation of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church), Friends of New Orleans meeting in Quaker Simplicity, and the Uptown Shepherd's Center, along with the Carrollton United Methodist Church.

Utilizing the building this way works well because the Presbyterians and the United Methodist churches flip flop services. While the United Methodists have worship service at 9:30 a.m., the Presbyterians have church school. They then trade places, and the United Methodist Church School meets at 10:45 a.m. while the Presbyterians have worship service in the Sanctuary at 11:00 a.m. The Quakers hold their quiet service in one of the upstairs rooms in the Education Building.

The Uptown Shepherd's Center utilizes the building all week from Monday through Friday. When necessary, they also use the building on Saturday.

Sharing the facility in this way fosters connection with other Christians and being in ministry with the community and people in need.

Ashes to ashes



Celebrating the burning of the mortgage note at Aurora UMC are: (front row) Lay Leader Babs Mollere, Rev. J. Roddy Taylor, District Superintendent Rev. Freddie Henderson, and Building Committee member John Owensby; (back row) Rev. Conrad Edwards, pastor Dr. Odell Simmons, and Rev. W.O. Lynch.

Aurora UMC burns its mortgage note

When a church gets ready to burn a paid-off mortgage note, it takes a spark. But it took a blaze to get Aurora UMC started on adding to its church facility back in 1987.

After a fire destroyed the church kitchen, church members re-evaluated what was really needed to reach the community they hoped to serve in the next century and embarked on building a Family Life Center. Two years later, the Algiers community had facilities for basketball and overnight youth groups, a commercial kitchen, a library, Sunday school rooms, and an expanded office suite for use by the congregation and the wider district neighborhood. What couldn't be seen was that they would go through a hurricane, a freeze, the death of the Building Committee chairman, several pastors, a lawsuit, double digit interest rates, and a downturn in the oil indus-

try along the way.

Developing gifts of the spirit, especially in the areas of perseverance and patience, the congregation completed paying some \$2,000,000 in 2000 to retire the debt, and celebrated the occasion on January 7, 2001 with a number of previous pastors and District Superintendent, Rev. Freddie Henderson.

In order to reach this debt-free goal in 15 years, church members became lenders through promissory notes to avoid high bank interest rates. It was a true jubilee to find the Aurora Church totally out of debt for the beginning of 2001.

Our buildings serve to remind us that God provides the foundation with Christ Jesus as the chief cornerstone and that we have the means to work together in reaching out to serve others in a caring community.

District laity prepares for Spring Fling

The New Orleans District Laity will hold a Spring Fling at Aurora United Methodist Church March 24, from 9-11 a.m. All lay leaders, associate lay leaders and pastors are encouraged to attend or send a representative.

The Spring Fling will include breakfast and feature entertainment from local churches, including choirs from Haven United Methodist Church and First UMC, Kenner, as well as liturgical dancers and the clown ministry from Cornerstone UMC.

The Spring Fling is designed to provide fellowship and a sharing of ideas and will be a unique way of celebrating

ministries and acknowledging contributions to the Daughenbaugh-Matheny Scholarship Fund and the Bob Lay Memorial 1000 Club. Please RSVP attendance by March 17 to Germaine Tropez at (504) 866-0229, after 6 p.m.

Send your church's stories to the District Communication Advisor:

Dian Kent
837 Sumner St.
New Orleans, LA 70114
(504) 368-2567

Billiot named Tribal Council director

Kevin Billiot, former executive director for the Dulac Community Center, assumed his current position as executive director for the Inter Tribal Council of Louisiana, Inc. on Feb. 21. "It was a very difficult decision to leave Dulac because I was happy with what we had accomplished and everyone had been so supportive of our efforts," said Billiot.

In his new position, Billiot will have the opportunity to improve employment and training programs for Native Americans throughout the state. The

council is a consortium of the Coushatta, Chitimacha and Tunica-Biloxi tribes, along with the Jena band of Choctaws and the United Houma Nation.

Under Billiot's direction, the community center's services were expanded and an advisory board was established to plan the development of a community health center. While he was at Dulac, the center received a \$50,000 planning grant to assist people living with HIV and AIDS.

Music scholarships available now

The Fellowship of United Methodists in Music and Worship Arts is currently accepting applications for four higher education scholarships. The awards include three \$1,000 Memorial Scholarships in music and one \$1,500 scholarship in the arts other than music.

All applicants must be a full-time music degree candidate, either entering as a freshman or already in an accredited university, college or school of theology. Applicants may also be following a course of study in special education in worship or in the arts related to worship.

Those applying must also be a member of The United Methodist Church for

at least one year immediately before applying, giving evidence of a strong Christian character and participation in Christian activities of the church and/or campus.

Applicants should demonstrate evidence of exceptional musical or other artistic talent, effective leadership ability and outstanding promise of future usefulness to the church. The deadline for receiving applications is March 30. To apply, please send name and address by e-mail to FUMMWA@aol.com. Interested persons may contact David Bone at (800) 952-8977, or visit the website at www.fummwa.org for more information.

Igniting Ministry training offers churches new evangelical tools

Louisiana Conference churches will receive a promotional boost this fall from Igniting Ministry, a media campaign of The United Methodist Church. The initiative offers local churches new evangelism tools, highlighted by a series of powerful national cable network commercials designed to raise positive awareness about the church. This unique program is a coordinated effort offering resources to assist local churches in strengthening their welcoming and marketing skills.

Igniting Ministry Regional Training, sponsored by United Methodist Communications, provides churches with comprehensive planning kits and practical "how-to" guides on enhancing invitational skills.

All churches are invited to send a team (pastor and at least one lay person) to the training coordinated by Dr. Rena Yocom, Director of Mission and Ministries, at the Louisiana Conference Center in Woodworth on April 24, from 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

The registration fee of \$35 per church covers the cost of the Igniting Ministry planning kit.

Lunch is \$5 per person. Please enclose registration fee with the form below. For more information, call (225) 346-1646.

Send registration form by deadline of April 10, 2001 to Betty Backstrom, 527 North Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70802. Check should be made out to Louisiana Annual Conference.



Igniting Ministry Regional Training
Registration Form
April 24, 2001

La. Methodist Conference Center in Woodworth
9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Church _____ District _____

Name (s) _____

Church Address _____

City/Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Ask and you shall receive!

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IN BRIEF

Reports from United Methodist News Service

La. Conference mourns passing of friend, Bishop Henderson

Bishop Cornelius Henderson, friend of the Louisiana Conference, died in December while serving a second term for the Florida Conference.

Henderson was active in providing seminars at prior pastor schools, now called minister schools. The bishop offered several seminars at different conference churches including "The Ships of the Church" course at Mount Zion UMC, New Orleans. He also rendered a special lecture series at Wesley UMC, Baton Rouge and preached at Christian vocation seminars.

Expression of sympathy and appreciation for Henderson's ministry may be sent to his spouse: Dorothy Henderson, 145 Benson Circle, Fairburn, GA 30213.

Nine ethnic church projects receive grants

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—Nine grants totaling \$122,000 have been awarded to United Methodist-sponsored projects and organizations serving racial-ethnic groups. Governing members of the United Methodist Board of Discipleship approved the grants during their Feb. 20-24 meeting.

Recipients include 2001 Institute for Church Growth and Evangelism, Saint Mark United Methodist Church, Wichita, Kan., \$20,000; Quest for Quality Seminars, California-Pacific Annual Conference, \$20,000; Honoring Our Journey: From Cradleboard to Cornerstone, \$15,000.

Other recipients: Project H.O.P.E., Fernwood United Methodist Church, Chicago, \$15,000; Vision Leadership Training Program, Saint Mark United Methodist Church, Los Angeles, \$15,000; Empowering the Laity for Ministry, Northeastern Jurisdiction Black Methodists for Church Renewal, \$10,000; Western Jurisdiction Korean-American Lay and Clergy Leadership Seminar, \$10,000; Youth Convocation 2001, Texas Annual Conference, \$10,000; Total Praise, West Ohio Conference, \$7,000. Grant program details are available by contacting Sang E. Chun at (615) 340-7050 or schun@gbod.org.

Southeastern United Methodists elect Whitaker bishop

LAKE JUNALUSKA, N.C.—A United Methodist clergyman who had declined nomination as a bishop of the church has been elected to that post by delegates from the Southeastern Jurisdiction. The Rev. Timothy W. Whitaker, 52, superintendent of the denomination's Norfolk (Va.) District, was elected Feb. 27 by the first ever called session of a jurisdictional conference. He was elected on the 17th ballot with 395 votes.

Some 524 delegates participated in the three-day session of the Southeastern Jurisdiction, which was called to elect a replacement for the late Bishop Cornelius Henderson. The new bishop was appointed to the church's Florida Area, which includes all of the state except the panhandle. He will begin his duties April 2. Whitaker was a nominee of the Virginia Annual (regional) Conference at the 2000 session of the Southeastern Jurisdiction in July but withdrew during the balloting. He initially declined the efforts of the Virginia delegation to endorse him as its candidate for the special session.

Louisiana Conference *NOW!*

William W. Hutchinson Resident Bishop

Rena Yocom Executive Director,
Conference Mission and Ministries

Betty Backstrom Editor

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Wendy Jones Subscriptions

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You can find the Louisiana Annual
Conference on the Internet at
<http://www.la-umc.org>



A UMNS photo by Paul Jeffrey/ACT

REBUILDING – Omar Vasquez, age 11, carries off a door that his father has recovered from the wreckage of their earthquake-damaged home in San Augustin, Usulután, El Salvador. Action by Churches Together partners in El Salvador, including the United Methodist Committee on Relief, are providing emergency assistance in hundreds of rural villages throughout the ravaged country. La. Conference Volunteers in Mission Director Larry Norman recently completed a damage assessment tour of the country in preparation for sending work teams to aid in the rebuilding effort.

WORLD WATCH

Commentary: End closure of West Bank and Gaza

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Rev. Alex Awad and his wife, Brenda, are missionaries with the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries, serving at Bethlehem Bible College and East Jerusalem Baptist Church. After six years of repeated applications to the Israeli government, Awad, a Palestinian American, received an official visa for his missionary work in 1995. His views expressed here.

BY REV. ALEX AWAD

Ten Palestinian men were standing by the wall at the Israeli checkpoint north of Bethlehem. I couldn't see their faces because the Israeli soldiers made them stand facing the wall with their arms above their heads. The fault of these men, who ranged in age from 25 to 35, was that they had sneaked out of Bethlehem to go to Jerusalem five miles away to find a day's work. However, they were caught before they could sneak back to their homes in Bethlehem.

When my turn at the checkpoint came, I showed my U.S. passport. The soldier smiled at me and wished me a nice day. I passed through the checkpoint without humiliation, but that Sunday evening I kept wondering what happened to the 10 Palestinian men. How long did they have to stand out in the street with their arms over their heads on this cold February night?

They were definitely luckier than the two Palestinian construction workers who were killed by settlers on their way to work in an Israeli settlement near Bethlehem, and perhaps more fortunate than those caught by Israeli soldiers trying to sneak in through the fields and brutally beaten up. These heartbreaking scenes could be witnessed on the outskirts of every Palestinian city and vil-

lage. All major Palestinian cities and towns have been under a stricter siege for the last four months, since the latest wave of violence began. Roughly 3 million people are trapped in their cities and villages. They are not allowed to travel to Israel, and frequently they are not allowed to travel to other Palestinian cities. In some cases, such as in Hebron and in Beit Jala, Palestinians cannot even travel by car from one neighborhood to another within the same city.

One must ask the question: Is the siege a security measure or is it a crime against a whole population?

Israelis claim that the closures are necessary to stop Palestinian terrorism. In reality, the closures increase hate, bitterness and mistrust, which lead to increased acts of violence and revenge that snuff out the lives of many innocent Israelis and Palestinians.

Over and over again, it has been proven that the siege is a collective punishment imposed largely upon a Palestinian population that is not engaged in acts of revenge and violence against Israelis. The few Palestinians who plan violence against Israel know how to avoid checkpoints and army camps, and they enter the heart of Israeli cities with unusual skill and ease. Closures do not stop terrorists; they only stop hard-working Palestinians from getting to their jobs and fields.

The closure of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip is a crime that must be stopped. Peace and reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians cannot be realized as long as one side of the divide functions as





Wearing the pants

La. Conference Director of Youth Ministry Carolyn Dove sports red silk boxers during the 2000 Senior High Retreat, held on Valentine's Day weekend. The underpants belonged to Ryan McDonald, a member of McGuire UMC in Monroe (right). Though the silk was really luxurious, "I did give them back," Carolyn said.

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March 25.

Guatemala, from page 1

"Give Ye Them to Eat" project in the Puebla area. The group spent considerable time discussing and drafting plans to communicate what they learned back in their individual conferences. We also discussed ways to promote the "Encounter with Christ" initiative back home in the hopes of gaining even more support for the fund.

Established in 1992, the fund was affirmed by the 1996 General Conference to provide long-term support for mission and ministry in the autonomous Methodist churches in Latin America and the Caribbean. When the corpus of the fund reached its first million dollars, grants were made available for specific ministries from the interest earned.

The Council of Evangelical Methodist Churches in Latin America and the Caribbean (CIEMAL) is the major partner with Global Ministries in "Encounter." Bishop Gutierrez is the president of CIEMAL, an organization of autonomous Methodist churches in 19 countries.

The Council's mission priorities include evangelization and new church development; women, children and youth; and community-based health care. Decisions about specific grants from the fund are made by CIEMAL and the General Board of Global Ministries.

As a member of the study team, I was privileged to see the church at work in Guatemala and Mexico. It was a joy to see the ways that we're in partnership with our sisters and brothers in Latin America.

One of the most impressive efforts we saw was a nutrition project in Guatemala. Some of our group held a four-year-old girl who had arrived at the center just a year ago. At that time,

she weighed only eight pounds. As a result of help she received from the Ruth and Naomi Project, the child now weighs 17 pounds and is much stronger.

I was moved by the dedication of the volunteers connected with the different ministries. At one church we visited, our group discovered that the pastor travels by foot with his family twice a week for three and a half hours in order to hold services. The amazing thing is that he volunteers his time, and receives no salary for his efforts. As a matter of fact, not one pastor in any of the 76 Methodist churches in Guatemala receives a salary.

In Mexico, "Give Ye Them to Eat" has been building economic independence for nearly 26 years to help people become economically more independent.

Participants in the program are taught how to cook more efficiently, using less wood for fuel. Farm animals are given to those in need, as well as assistance with breeding. After the animals give birth, one of the offspring is given back to the project to help another person in need.

Perhaps one of the most important efforts is a nursing program, which teaches volunteers about home health and proper sanitation. These people then go on to share what they've learned in their own neighborhoods.

Bishop Gutierrez not only welcomes visitors to "tierra santa," holy ground, but invites them to be converted again and again in their "encounter with Christ." Such was the case for me, as I shared in the fellowship and love of Christ with the men, women and children and heard their message of hope and even joy in the midst of extreme hardship and poverty.



Children at a Methodist church in Patalup, Guatemala, knits caps and water bottle carriers as part of a women's mission project for the needy. La. Conference member Nanci Youngblood visited the country as part of a national group touring Latin America.

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NEWS,
OPPORTUNITIES AND
WITNESS OF LOUISIANA
CONFERENCE MINISTRIES

VOL. 2, NO. 6

BATON ROUGE, LA

March 23, 2001

Bishop appoints new D.S. for Baton Rouge

By Betty Backstrom
Editor

Bishop William W. Hutchinson has announced the appointment of Dr. C. Gerald Richardson as superintendent of the Baton Rouge District effective in June. Richardson will replace retiring District Superintendent Dr. Leslie P. Norris.

Richardson is a member of the Louisiana Conference currently appointed to The General Board of Discipleship in Nashville, Tenn. His responsibilities



Richardson

Richardson has served churches throughout the Conference including

include conference spiritual leadership development, staff leader for the Large Membership Church Committee, team leader for the Conference Leader Formation Team, and editor of the newsletter, "Leading from the Center."

First UMC, Mansfield; Christ Church, Shreveport; First United Methodist Church, Alexandria; and as district superintendent in the Acadiana District. He is presently a member of the Board of Ordained Ministry of the Louisiana Conference.

His educational background includes a B.A. from Louisiana College in Pineville; Master of Theology from Perkins School of Theology at SMU; and Doctor of Ministries from Austin School of Theology in Austin, Tex.

Announcing
Annual Conference
This Year's Theme:

*Alive in the Spirit
Walking in the Way*

June 3-6, 2001
Centenary College
Shreveport

INSIDE

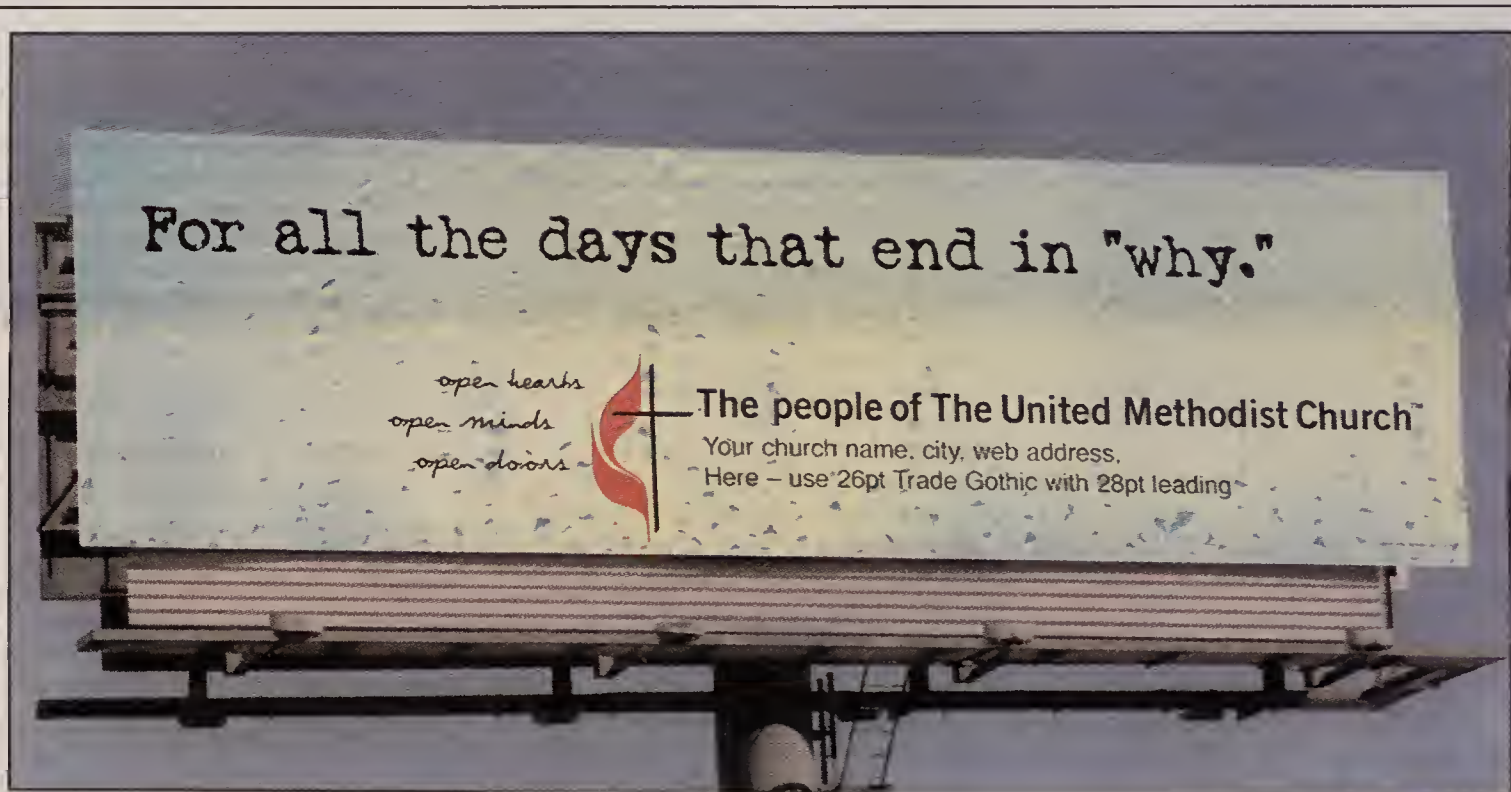


Regional training
registration form /3



La. Tech student to lead
Honduras mission /5

**Your next issue of
La.Now! will arrive
April 13.**



It only takes a spark

A billboard mock-up demonstrates only one of the ways The United Methodist Church will reach out to the "unchurched" through the upcoming Igniting Ministry media campaign. Part of the program is training to prepare churches to receive new members.

Bishop urges participation in Igniting Ministry training

An Igniting Ministry regional training event, one of 30 being held across the country to help local United Methodist congregations sharpen their hospitality and marketing skills, will be held April 24 from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. at the Louisiana Conference Center in Woodworth.

"Igniting Ministry will open doors we've never walked through before," said Bishop William W. Hutchinson.

"Evangelism will take on a new look and visitors will come to

our churches who want and need to experience the warmth and openness of spirit they have seen in the commercials. We just need to be prepared for the excitement and interest this campaign will generate. The regional training will help us be ready for the joy we're going to see," he added.

Sessions are being conducted in each of The United

See Igniting Ministry, page 3

Annual Conference to feature labyrinth for prayer walks

A canvas labyrinth for prayer walks will be available every morning to those attending this year's Louisiana Annual Conference, to be held June 3-6 at Centenary College in Shreveport. Additional times available for labyrinth walks include 12 noon-1:30 p.m. on Monday and Tuesday, and Monday evening from 4:30-7 p.m. The Academy

for Spiritual Leadership acquired the labyrinth last year for use in local churches, youth gatherings and Academy retreats.

The labyrinth has been used as a sacred path of prayer and meditation since the 12th century. It is patterned after the medieval labyrinth which is in the Chartres Cathedral just outside of

Paris, France.

The Academy labyrinth is painted on canvas in three pieces which are easily put together with velcro.

It is kept in a portable storage container which can be shipped or transported as needed.

Early Christian labyrinths date back to the fourth century.

ON THE JOURNEY

A New Day for United Methodism

I was in the eighth grade when television came to our house. It was no small feat. We had to erect a very tall antenna that had to be adjusted with every station we wanted to watch. On the antenna there was a motor that was controlled by a dial inside the house. When you turned the dial for the rotor, it would engage the motor that adjusted the antenna so that it would face the signal from the station many miles away. Night after night we sat and watched snow, kept turning the antenna hoping to create a clear picture, and thought we were making great progress when we could at least hear the dialogue.

My family mixed television and radio in those early years. We continued to listen to the many radio programs we had come to love and we began to intersperse them with the new venue of a moving picture in a box. It was not until many years later that television became integral to my daily means of gathering news and information. Now, it is a daily ritual to turn it on, watch a drama or two and listen to the news. In our home in Baton Rouge there are four television sets! And even with there being only two of us at home, there have been times when all four were on at once! (What an embarrassment to admit that!)

While we have blamed television for many ills in society, it is a known fact that it is the main media for dispensing information and advertising and has an inroad into people's lives that is unequaled by other means. Along with the difficulties it has caused, it also has brought much progress and has brought the people of the world closer to one another. Today's people are very dependent on this medium of communication. I suspect there are very few homes in which the "tube" is not present.

In light of the predominance of television, The United Methodist Church is undertaking a massive campaign to make our presence known through this medium. "Igniting Ministry" is one of the most ambitious and most exciting undertakings of the church in several years. "Igniting Ministry" includes



Bishop William W. Hutchinson

a saturation of the airwaves with stimulating and touching spot ads that will lift up the many faces of our church and will invite people to come and worship with us. These ads will begin to appear in September and will be seen across

the nation.

When I saw the sample ads I was very excited about their content and their potential to interest people in our church. I think every United Methodist will be pleased with what they see and

In light of the predominance of television, The United Methodist Church is undertaking a massive campaign to make our presence known through this medium.

will be energized by their potential. I predict we will see a substantial increase in visitors to our services once these ads begin to appear. I just want us to be ready to receive the visitors with enthusiasm and encouragement.

Elsewhere in this edition of Louisiana NOW! you will find an announcement about a regional training event that will help us prepare for the new interest that will be forthcoming. Please pay special attention to this announcement and make every effort to be part of the training. You and your church will be blessed by your preparation to receive people in the name of Christ.

What a joy to be part of a new day for United Methodism! I'm glad we can rely on current cable systems and local stations to beam the good news of Jesus Christ right into every living room in Louisiana! It's one of the most creative and progressive things we have done! I know you will want to be on the front lines as this initiative unfolds. This truly is an exciting part of the journey . . .

Bill Hutchinson

Clergy golf tournament teeing off in May

The 17th Annual Clergy Golf Tournament for the Louisiana Conference will be held May 3 at the East Ridge Country Club in Shreveport with a 12:30 p.m. "tee time." A putting contest is also scheduled that day for noon.

The cost of the tournament is \$43, and includes greens fees and space on a golf cart.

Dinner is courtesy of Christ United Methodist Church.

Tournament sponsors, for a donation of \$100 or more, can play and eat without charge.

Participants must be pre-registered to play. Checks should be made out to PGA (Pastors Golfing Around) and sent to: Rev. Jack Phelps, 136 Commanche Trail, West Monroe, LA 71291.

For additional registration information, contact Phelps at (318) 397-3878. For local instructions, contact Rev. Larry O'Dell at (318) 686-2553.



Photo by Joshua Lewis

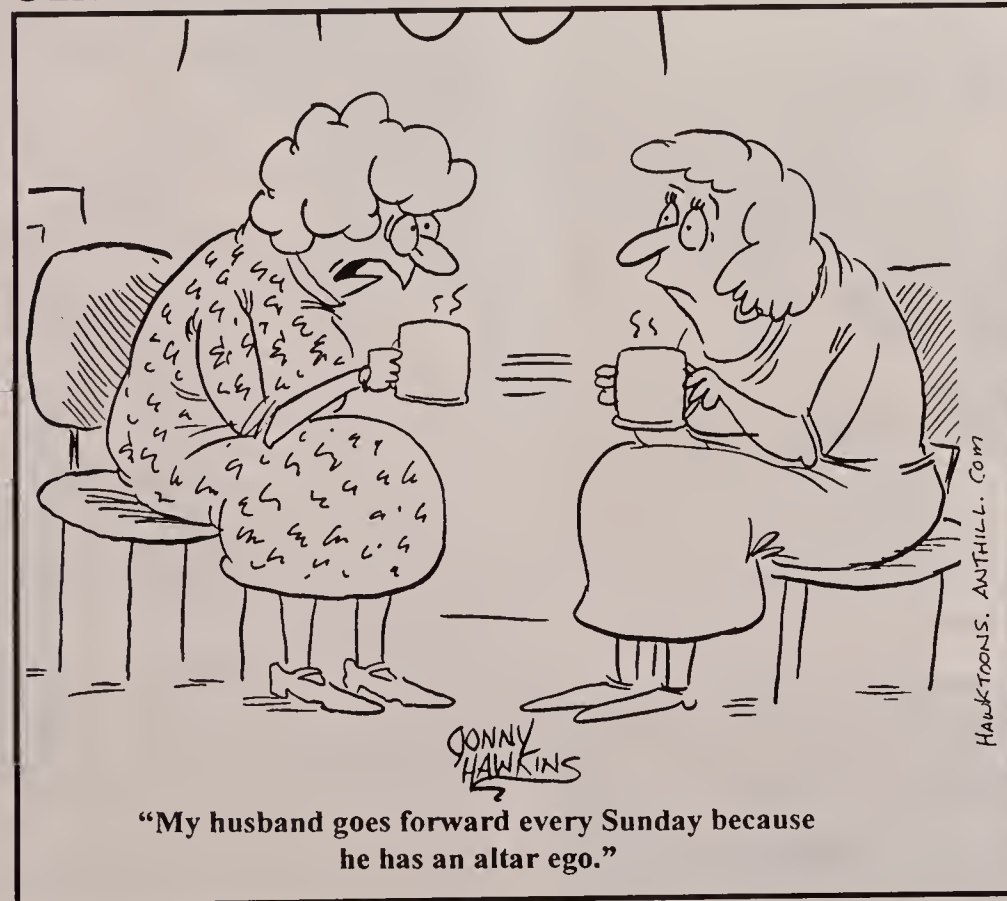
Living water

Louisiana State Representative Melvin "Kip" Holden offers his views on the state's role in regulating water use at the forum titled, "Stewardship of Louisiana's Community Waters" at University United Methodist Church in Baton Rouge, March 13. The event was part of a statewide series sponsored by the Louisiana Interchurch Conference. "It is hoped that these forums will educate people and effectively call them to the biblical ethic of stewardship in protecting Louisiana's abundant water system, with which God has blessed us," said Rev. Shawn Anglim, United Methodist campus minister at LSU. Seated in the pew are Rev. Dana Krutz, an Episcopal priest and director of the Louisiana Interchurch Conference, and Fr. Than Vu of the LSU Catholic Center.

It's true! Win a free copy of Jack Dew's "A View from the Pew"

The first 100 people to register for the Louisiana Conference United Methodist Men and Youth Expedition will receive a free copy of "A View from the Pew" written by Jack Dew, a United Methodist from the Monroe District. The event will be held April 27-28 at the Conference Center in Woodworth. To register and for more information, call Ron Sarver at (337) 233-7696 or (337) 981-9401.

STAINED GLASS



"My husband goes forward every Sunday because he has an altar ego."

Singles seminar to focus on relationships

"The Few Things that Matter," a seminar designed for single adults, will be held at University United Methodist Church in Lake Charles April 7 from 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m. The topical event, led by Kent Kilbourne, will offer insights into developing long-term relationships and significant friendships.

Kilbourne is on the staff of First UMC, Fort Worth, and has been involved for

the past 27 years with programs for relational assessment, marriage and family enrichment.

Cost of the seminar is \$25 per person if registered by April 1; \$35 if registered after that date or at the door.

Registration fee covers all materials and lunch. For more information, contact Marj Robinson at (337) 477-2003 or Rachel Murphy at (337) 431-7194.

Workshop: Clowning around for Christ

A clowning workshop for persons interested in participating in clown ministry will be held March 31 at Rayne Memorial United Methodist Church in New Orleans from 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m..

Laura J. Kirkpatrick (aka Lulu the Clown) will lead the workshop, which focuses on the theology and practice of

this unique ministry. Participants will discuss the different aspects of clowning, learn about makeup and costumes, and discover "tricks" of the trade.

The \$15 workshop fee includes lunch. Reservations should be made by March 26 by contacting Carol Sherer at (504) 899-3431.

Igniting Ministry, *from page 1*

Methodist Church's five jurisdictions as part of the Igniting Ministry national media campaign. The campaign includes an ambitious effort to place on cable television national commercials aimed at increasing the awareness of The United Methodist Church and its ministries and inviting people into a relationship with Christ through the local churches.

The registration deadline for the April 24 regional training is April 1, and a form for the event can be found below.

According to Shirley Whipple Struchen, Igniting Ministry's director of regional training, each participating local church's teaching leadership team (two to three leaders from within the congregation, including the pastor) will be given the opportunity to consider and to discuss "how we make people feel welcome and wanted."

At the Igniting Ministry training event, participants will:

- * Receive training in how to ensure that your church offers a comfortable and welcoming climate to newcomers

- * Discover how to lead small groups in building needed welcoming and invitational skills

- * Examine your church's phone etiquette

- * Learn how to increase your church's media presence

Each church represented at the event will receive an Igniting Ministry Planning Kit, filled with practical "how-to" guides related to honing hospitality skills and conducting media campaigns based on Igniting Ministry. Newspaper ads, radio spots and artwork for supporting media will be included in the planning kit.

The campaign is designed to support and encourage local churches to become active partners in reaching out to "unchurched" people and creating renewed enthusiasm among members. It will be kicked off in September with a "United Methodist Open House Month" involving local churches.

The 2000 General Conference authorized United Methodist Communications (UMCom) to coordinate Igniting Ministry and to create the commercials being used. Nearly 40 percent of the viewers polled after viewing the TV ads indicated an interest in visiting a United Methodist church.

Sparking church growth

Igniting Ministry workshop deadline April 1

Louisiana Conference churches will receive a promotional boost this fall from Igniting Ministry, a media campaign of The United Methodist Church. The initiative offers local churches new evangelism tools, highlighted by a series of powerful national cable network commercials designed to raise positive awareness about the church. This unique program is a coordinated effort offering resources to assist local churches in strengthening their welcoming and marketing skills.

Igniting Ministry Regional Training, sponsored by United Methodist Communications, provides churches with comprehensive planning kits and practical "how-to" guides on enhancing invitational skills.

All churches are invited to send a team (pastor and at least one lay person) to the training coordinated by Dr. Rena Yocom, Director of Mission and Ministries, at the Louisiana Conference Center in Woodworth on April 24, from 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

The registration fee of \$35 per church covers the cost of the Igniting Ministry planning kit.

Lunch is an additional \$5 per person. Please enclose registration fee with the form below. For more information, call (225) 346-1646.

Send registration form by deadline of April 1 to Betty Backstrom, 527 North Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70802. Check should be made out to Louisiana Annual Conference.

Laying the Foundation

Louisiana United Methodist Foundation provides grants for community programs

BY TRACIE WHARTON

The Foundation's Grants Initiative provides start up funds for projects that address community needs. In recent years, more than \$2 million has been awarded to United Methodist Ministries in Louisiana and in 2000 we began focusing on ministerial education through our Service Loan Program.

Loans were made to 25 students from Louisiana attending Methodist seminaries, with an agreement to forgive the debt through service in the Louisiana Annual Conference. Heather Haussler, a freshman at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary writes, "The money received from the Foundation was a blessing. The funding enabled me to grow academically and spiritually." Another loan recipient, Elaine Burleigh at St. Paul, states "I will never find the right words to express my appreciation to you [the Foundation] for helping to make seminary a reality for me...I have never doubted that this is where I am suppose to be."

If your church has an innovative approach to building ministries through one of the following established priorities, please contact Tracie Wharton (800) 256-9317.

Leadership Development

Encouraging spiritual development of ministry and laypersons desiring to become leaders within The United Methodist Church. These programs have included:

- * Academy for Spiritual Leadership
- * Parker Institute for Spirituality

New Church Development

Providing start-up funding for new churches in an effort to increase membership of The United Methodist Church. Since 1996, the Foundation has provided grants to:



Wharton

- * A new church on the North Shore to hire an education director

- * A new church in Baton Rouge to begin their music ministry

Ministerial Recruitment & Education

Supporting endowments for intern programs and scholarships that will directly benefit Louisiana natives, the Foundation has contributed to the following:

- * Perkins School of Theology
- * St. Paul School of Theology
- * Gammon ITC Satellite Program at Dillard University

Existing Ministries Developing Innovative Initiatives

Enhancing the quality of urban and rural life through support of community programs. Examples are:

- * Aldersgate UMC, Slidell, Adult Alzheimer "Angels" program
- * St. Mark's Community Center job training for troubled youth
- * Friends of Families expansions into Alexandria, Lake Charles & New Orleans

Hands-on Mission Projects

Giving faith communities the opportunity to reach out to individuals bound by economic or language barriers, or to those stricken by illness or disaster, for example:

- * Restorative Justice - GRACE Camp for children of incarcerated adults
- * Volunteers in Mission - medical missions to Mexico

Deadlines for submission of grant applications are May 30th and November 30th of each year, with notification dates of September 15th and March 15th.



igniting
MINISTRY

Igniting Ministry Regional Training

Registration Form

April 24, 2001

La. Methodist Conference Center in Woodworth

9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Church _____ District _____

Name (s) _____

Church Address _____

City/Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Clergy spouse has a heart for using art in ministry, therapy

BY SARAH WILLIS
DISTRICT MISSIONER

Allison Milliron has a heart for using art in ministry and has been using her talents as part of the Angel Program at Aldersgate United Methodist Church in Slidell, an adult day care facility for clients dealing with Alzheimer's and their caregivers. The clients of the Angel Program start off every day by singing "In My Heart There Rings a Melody," which became the theme for a mural the participants and volunteers created under the guidance of Milliron.

The mural is truly a melody of memories that were recalled by the participants through a series of discussions and collage-making projects. The participants were encouraged to draw upon some of their happiest or most profound experiences. After each time of reminiscing and storytelling, the participants looked through magazines and cut out pictures that related to their specific memories. These pictures were then arranged to form individual collages.

The mural was the idea of Allison Milliron, wife of Rev. Josh Milliron, associate pastor of Aldersgate UMC in Slidell, who is currently working part-time with the Angel Program using art in therapy. They are expecting their first child in February. Allison, who earned a Master of Divinity from Asbury Theological Seminary and who is a certified candidate for Deacon within The United Methodist Church, also holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Auburn University.

The basic design of the musical staff, notes, sky and clouds were traced and painted on the wall by the participants. A memory image from each participant's collage was later added by Allison to the notes in the center section of the mural. The non-linear nature of this center section reflects the time sequences of their memories.

Although the participants may not be able to remember each memory in the order in which it happened, each still rings in their hearts a note of joy or nostalgia. The other notes that remain on the musical staff compose the tune of "How Great Thou Art," reminding the viewer that all experiences of life are a

gift from God.

Another example of the use of art in ministry is a sign that Allison created for "The Way," a café on the Aldersgate campus which is used primarily to greet newcomers and for fellowship. As a member of the Evangelism Committee at Aldersgate, she created the new sign to make it easier for visitors to locate the café.

Using art as a community ministry, Allison worked with the Slidell Boys and Girls Club to increase the self-esteem of the children through art. Thirty-five boys and girls ranging in ages from six to 17, with the help of two artists and a Shell Oil Foundation grant, collaborated to create an outdoor traveling mural depicting the theme of "What Giving Means to Me." Many of the children who participated gained a new perspective on Christmas giving, in addition to receiving the gifts of self-worth and pride through their participation.

Allison has placed her name in the Conference Human Resource Data Bank as one who is available to assist others in art ministries, and you can reach her by e-mail at allimilliron@aol.com. She also offers these suggestions for possible ways to use art in ministry.

With children, young adults and college students, she recommends painting murals, or creating collaborative sculptures which present the gospel through everyday witness and by teaching the story depicted. The fruits of the spirit are witnessed and the gospel is shared "on the spur of the moment."

In prison ministry or other ministries (for example, with the homeless, teens and children in crisis, or persons with disabilities) within the community, art increases self-worth and self-respect.

In other projects art can be used to penetrate a community and to gather data which could be helpful in planting a church in the area.

Art can also be used as a tool for counseling, especially with children and adults in the hospital.

Creating banners and other visuals such as altar decorations for worship can aid in both corporate and personal worship, Milliron said.



Artist Allison Milliron uses her abilities in community ministry and to brighten the lives of people in need. She works closely with the Angel Program at Aldersgate United Methodist Church in Slidell, where her husband, Rev. Josh Milliron, is an associate pastor. The Angel Program is an adult day care facility for clients dealing with Alzheimer's and their caregivers. The clients of the Angel Program start off every day by singing "In My Heart There Rings a Melody," which became the theme for the mural below. Participants and volunteers created the art under Milliron's guidance. Some of the mural's rich detail is shown above.



Wesley Foundation intern to lead Honduras mission team

By Meghan Hochstetler

Intern, Louisiana Tech Wesley Foundation

Last year when I signed up to go to Honduras with a group of people I really didn't know at all, I had no idea what I was getting myself into. Nor did I realize that I was embarking on a life-changing experience. The ten days I spent in a remote little village called Nueva Victoria in the mountains of Honduras last May opened my eyes, renewed my spirit, touched my heart and caused me to change my entire outlook on life in America.

Our team worked alongside the villagers helping them to rebuild their houses and repair the devastation that Hurricane Mitch imposed upon their lives. It was a grueling experience both physically and emotionally, but in the lives of these villagers I saw Christ more clearly than I ever have before. When the ten days were over, our team had made some visible progress on the homes of these Hondurans, but more importantly, the lives of both the privileged American college students and the impoverished Honduran farmers and their families had been embraced by the love of Christ. I didn't want to leave, and on the ride to the airport I cried thinking about the children I had so fallen in love with that I wanted to take them back to Louisiana with me.

This year, I am ecstatic beyond words to be taking a team back to Honduras to continue to help rebuild the country. Our trip is May 20-30. This year we will be living and working in Tegucigalpa, the nation's capital, which will be a drastic change from a tiny village with no real signs of modern civilization. We will be helping to build a church and possibly some houses as well.

I just returned from a team leader training weekend put on by the Louisiana Volunteers in Mission, which is the organization with which we are going. After this weekend, I think for the first time I realize the level of involvement that comes with planning and leading this trip.

There are many different steps and many different responsibilities that the team and I will have to accomplish in the next several months in order to make this trip happen.

We chose Honduras mainly because



Meghan Hochstetler (left), an intern at the Louisiana Tech Wesley Foundation and a member of Broadmoor UMC in Shreveport, was part of a mission team that worked in Honduras last year. This year, she will lead another team to the country still recovering from a massive hurricane that hit more than two years ago. "We spent almost as much time playing with the children as we did doing construction work," she says. "The kids loved us because we were different, and we loved them because they were adorable. They were with us from the time we woke up until the time we went to sleep." Other team members pictured are Leigh Anna Ridge, First UMC in Arcadia; Becca Partin, Christ Community Church in Ruston; Clay Williams, Blackwater UMC in Baton Rouge; and Melissa Campbell, St. Timothy UMC in Mandeville.

we had such a moving experience last year and because we recognize that the need for assistance is still great. Hurricane Mitch pretty much totally demolished the entire country in 1998, and the country is still struggling to restore itself.

After choosing the location, we began to assemble the team. We have a team of about 15 at this time, and we meet weekly on Tuesday nights. During our meeting time we cover details such as insurance forms and ordering passports; discuss how to adjust to living in a new culture; and spend time in worship and prayer.

One of the biggest responsibilities we

have for the remainder of the school year is raising the needed funds to take our team to Honduras. The cost for the trip is \$885 per person, plus an additional \$2,000 for the cost of the construction materials. So, if we take a team of 15 students, the entire cost of the trip will be \$15,275.

We have several different fundraisers planned to acquire these funds. Our team recorded and sold tapes of the different speakers at a recent Ashram retreat in Ruston; we go along with Wesley's outreach team to different churches in the North Louisiana/South Arkansas area and ask for donations; we will hold a golf marathon in the spring;

we will send out support letters to family and friends asking for financial and prayerful support for our trip; and we have a few other ideas in the works to help us reach our financial goal. The grand total of \$15,275 may seem like a lot to raise (and it is), but we know that God is faithful and that He will provide for us. I ask on behalf of our mission team for your prayers for every aspect of our trip. God answers prayers, and I know he will make this an awesome trip.

If any of you are interested in contributing financially to this mission, that would also be greatly appreciated. We are excited about this trip, and we are ready to go!!!

Fore the Children

Shreveport golfer donates funds to outdoor center

The Louisiana Methodist Children's Home of Ruston held a dedication service for the latest addition to the Outdoor Wilderness Learning Center March 6.

Bishop William W. Hutchinson directed the dedication of the Therapeutic Outdoor Program building that houses a kitchen, laundry, showers and bathrooms.

The six cabins presently surrounding the new building are used by the Children's Home youth for campouts. The TOP facilities will be utilized for additional programs involving children

and youth with special needs.

Hal Sutton, a professional golfer and member of Noel United Methodist Church in Shreveport, made the construction of the building possible by designating the Children's Home as recipient of his charitable proceeds from the PGA's President's Cup Golf Tournament.

Ashley Sutton attended the ceremony honoring her husband. Music was provided by the Youth Alive Choir under the direction of Rev. Mickey Stringfield and Marianna Wimberly of the Children's Home.



Ashley Sutton and Louisiana Children's Home of Ruston Director Terrel DeVille stand in front of a new facility made possible by golfer and United Methodist Hal Sutton.

VIM assessment team sifts through earthquake aftermath in El Salvador

BY BETTY BACKSTROM
EDITOR

Volunteers in Mission directors and coordinators from the South Central Jurisdiction were part of an assessment team for the United Methodist Committee on Relief, which recently traveled to earthquake-ravaged El Salvador. Accompanying the group were Larry Powell from UMCOR and Jeanie Blankenbaker, coordinator for mission volunteers with the General Board of Global Ministries.

In December, a series of three earthquakes struck El Salvador. Nearly 3,000 deaths occurred and approximately 300,000 homes were destroyed as a result of these devastating events.

In Santa Tecla, an area the size of two city blocks was wiped out due to a resulting avalanche. In that area alone, around 850 were killed. The first earthquake occurred around 11:45 a.m., and the avalanche happened while children were at school. Many of those children were left orphaned because their parents were at home during the avalanche.

Tony Fontenot of Asbury United Methodist Church, Lafayette, along with

Larry Norman, director of Volunteers in Mission for the Conference, served as a part of the assessment team. "The people there had very little to start with, and they lost it all after the earthquakes. It was overwhelming to see everyone living in plastic shelters with dirt floors. There were so many children without parents and grandparents," said Fontenot. "As we walked along, we knew we were standing on holy ground, a graveyard for hundreds of victims. Viewing the area was like standing in the aftermath of an airline crash. It was devastating."

The United Methodist Church is joining Action of Christians Together in an interdenominational effort to reconstruct homes of the poorest residents of El Salvador. Volunteers will work directly with the local Methodist church in three areas: Tacuba, El Espino and Santa Tecla, which is located on the outskirts of the capital city of San Salvador. El Espinosa is found near Ahuachapan, which has been served by several Louisiana VIM projects.

The assessment team toured all of the

See El Salvador, page 8

Campus ministry leadership retreat slated

The Louisiana Conference Campus Ministry Leadership Team will host a spring retreat for college students April 6-8 at the Conference Center in Woodworth.

Rev. Gail Bowman, chaplain for Dillard University and Rev. Jack O'Dell, chaplain for Centenary College will facilitate the event which focuses on build-

ing relationships.

Delegates to represent the Conference at Student Forum 2001 will be elected during the retreat.

Cost is \$70, and the registration deadline is April 1. Contact your campus ministry for forms and information, or visit the Conference website at www.la-umc.org.

Visual enhancement workshop slated for St. Mark

A workshop entitled "Visual Enhancement of Worship Space" will be held at St. Mark United Methodist Church in Baton Rouge April 28, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

The church invites district laity and

clergy to attend the workshop, which will be facilitated by Letty Strawbridge and Gladys Ford. St. Mark UMC is located at 1445 North 39th St. For more information and to register, call the church at (225) 357-6150.

Louisiana Conference *NOW!*

William W. Hutchinson	Resident Bishop
Rena Yocom	Executive Director, Conference Mission and Ministries
Betty Backstrom	Editor
Joshua Lewis, Lane Winn	Contributing Writers/Photographers

Wendy Jones Subscriptions

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Director of Christian Education

Christ United Methodist Church in Shreveport is seeking a director of Christian Education. A college degree in Christian Education or another church-related field is preferred. Salary and benefits are \$28,000-\$32,000.

Please send resume to 1204 Crabapple Dr., Shreveport, LA, or fax to (318) 686-2578. For additional information, call (318) 686-2553.



MARCH 23, 24, 25, 2001
FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL
LOUISIANA VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION
888.239.5286

Good Samaritan offering Apr. 15 funds three institutions

Pendleton physician practices with faith

Joseph Epps, MD, believes in the higher power of God.

It's not something he learned during his years of religious-based education. It's not something he learned during his intense medical school studies or his neurology residency. It's not a belief he acquired from the ministers at Cornerstone United Methodist Church in New Orleans.

Neurosurgeon Joseph Epps, MD, a member of the Pendleton Memorial Methodist Hospital Medical Staff, understands that God exists through his interaction with severely ill and injured patients and their families. He knows about God through the values and morals he learned from his parents which he shares with his daughters. He recognizes God in the individuals he encounters in Cornerstone's community outreach programs. Dr. Epps builds on those beliefs, understanding and recognition during the weekly church services he attends with his wife.

As a neurosurgeon, Dr. Epps focuses on the diagnosis and treatment of individuals with injury to, or diseases of the brain, spine or peripheral nerves such as

aneurysms of the brain; clogged arteries in the neck that can lead to stroke, head and spine trauma; chronic back pain; and brain and spinal tumors. Dr. Epps' patients, who may or may not be treated surgically, suffer injury or illness ranging from carpal tunnel disease and spina bifida to epilepsy and spinal cord injury.

"This can be a very humbling specialty," Dr. Epps explains. "When you deal with such severe illness or injury, there are times when the outcome exceeds expectations. The results could be attributed to luck or faith, depending on your core beliefs. I tend to believe in the existence of a higher power, especially when the outcome is a little different than what we would expect."

Although Dr. Epps does not initiate prayer with his patients, he welcomes the opportunity to join with them, their families and their respective ministers in spiritual reflection at various times during their care and recovery. "Some patients ask me to pray with them prior to surgery, while others seem to need prayer during the recovery process, which can be very slow," he says. "New



Dr. Joseph Epps is a member of the Pendleton Memorial Methodist Hospital Medical Staff and attends Cornerstone United Methodist Church in New Orleans.

Orleans is a very religious-oriented city, with many denominations. Because of the nature of the illnesses that we deal with - many of which are life threatening or life altering - I have encountered many faiths and ministers who work

closely with the patient and his or her family."

"If the patient asks, or the family asks me to pray with them, I do not hesitate," he emphasizes. "If a minister or family

See Pendleton, page 8

Peoples Center makes a difference through love, concern and dedication

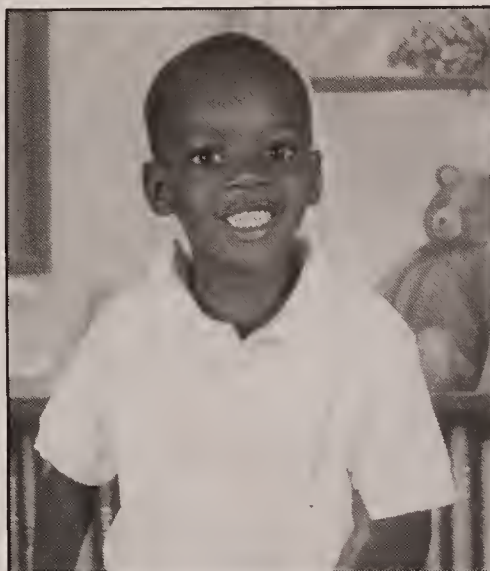
By Rev. Marva L. Mitchell
Executive Director

There is no greater joyful reward in the ministry to children and youth than to see the twinkle in the eyes of a happy child and a broad smile on an innocent face. This is the image that comes to life for the Peoples' staff in everyday experiences. The laughter that comes from the children we serve is an indication to us that we are providing a safe place, quality care and early learning development in a wholesome and spiritual environment. Through love, concern and dedication, we are continuing to make a difference in the lives of children, youth and families.

For 79 years, Peoples Center has been touching the hearts of poor families and their children who are in need of the simple means for survival. This mission that began primarily to help families in the neighborhood of the Peoples Center location, today serves Metro New Orleans and surrounding parishes. It reaches the very pulse of the daily survival of the unfortunate, who are at risk and live in poverty.

The demand for child care, Early learning development programs and summer camp programs continues to increase each year. This is largely due in part to the large percentage of adults who have existed on the welfare rolls and are now involved in other government self-help programs. Peoples plays a major role in the lives of these families.

Peoples' affordable rates [\$50 per week per child] allows parents who are minimum-wage earners receive subsidies from government sources an opportunity to become self-sufficient or educated. While the children are in our



Herman Howard: just one of the smiling faces at Peoples Methodist Community Center

care we are also helping adults to build self-worth and self-esteem.

In addition to serving children and youth ages 2-12 years old, we will once again enroll infants as young as six months to meet another growing demand.

The Good Samaritan Offering is a source of revenue which enables Peoples Center to continue its ministry in making life better for those who are less fortunate. We operate on a bare-bones budget. The Peoples Child Care Providers/Teachers earn minimum wages just as those whom we serve, for they themselves are parents with families. To date there are 48 students enrolled for the fall semester. We anti-

See Peoples, page 3



Lafon Home celebrates Carnival

The Lafon Home held its annual residents' Mardi Gras Ball recently. This year's theme was "Mardi Gras on the Nile." Thanks to the decorating magic of Ms. Barabino, activity director, the dining room was transformed into an oasis on the Nile. The court consisted of the following persons: Queen 2001 Mildred Jefferson; King 2001 Ivan Gordan; Maids Shirley Galler and Emeline Doyle; Dukes Robert Williams and Donald Adams.

The court was introduced by Norman Robinson, a news anchor at WDSU-TV. The queen and her maids were escorted by the former New Orleans Saints and Philadelphia Eagles player, Richard Cooper. Following the coronation, the royalty and their subjects were treated to a royal repast prepared by Dietary Manager Loraine

Tate and her staff.

Plans are now developing for Lafon's major fundraiser, "A Jazzy Night in June," to be held June 8 in the Grand Ballroom of the Radisson Hotel. The dinner, dance and silent auction will have as its musical guest the William Houston, Jr. Orchestra.

So, if you want to have a wonderful meal, dance the Bus Stop and meet good people, while supporting a very worthwhile endeavor, "A Jazzy Night" is the ticket!!! For additional information, contact Ted Jones at (504) 288-2314.

Organizations preparing summer projects, please don't forget Lafon! There are many things that organizations can assist with at Lafon. Contact the activity director and find out just how helpful you can be.

El Salvador, *from page 6*



A makeshift memorial honors one of the thousands that died during a recent series of earthquakes in El Salvador.

targeted areas, and began the process of setting up the infrastructure to provide adequate lodging, transportation and sanitary meals for volunteers. The date to begin receiving mission teams should fall within the next two or three months. Fontenot is scheduled to lead a Conference VIM team into El Salvador in February or March 2002.

"The Louisiana Conference will begin immediately to recruit team leaders and teams to go into this area of El Salvador. We hope to have teams before the end of the year, and we will continue to emphasize recruitment during 2002," said Norman.

While there, the Louisiana contingent visited Ahuachapan and talked with Juan Soliez Mayorga, president of the Methodist Church of El Salvador. The side trip included a stop at El Roca Eterna, where several Louisiana VIM teams worked for two years to build a church sanctuary and educational wing. A church parsonage is still under construction.

Immediately after the first earthquake, UMCOR sent \$10,000, along with food, corrugated tin and plastic for temporary shelters. Additional funds were sent after the second earthquake. Pastors should note that the advance special number for the El Salvador earthquake is 911-447-8.

CONFERENCE CALENDAR

MARCH

25	Camping Sunday	
29-31	Academy for Spiritual Leadership Track One, 2000-2001	La. Conference Center

APRIL

1	Special Offering for One Great Hour of Sharing	
5-8	Volunteers in Mission	Reynosa, Mexico
6-8	College Campus Spring-In Retreat	La. Conference Center
15	Special Offering for Good Samaritan Observance	

Peoples, *from page 7*

pate the summer camp enrollment of an additional 50 students for 10 weeks. We operate on the following budgets:

2000 Budget \$222,854.96
2001 Budget \$227,523.63

Your financial help to the Louisiana Conference Related Institutions makes it possible to carry on the mission of the church, serving for generations and generations yet to come.

Peoples has an open door policy. We welcome visitors and encourage mission

groups to come and give us a hand with repairs, building maintenance and the like.

We encourage churches to consider Peoples as a mission project and budget item. Our address is 2019 Simon Bolivar Ave. New Orleans, La. 70113. Telephone (504) 524-1041.

Peoples Center believes in the words of Proverbs 22:6 – "Train up a child in the way they should go, and when they are old they will not depart from it."



igniting MINISTRY

Bishop declares Open House Month



THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
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WILLIAM W. HUTCHINSON
BISHOP

EPISCOPAL DECLARATION

SEPTEMBER IS "OPEN HOUSE MONTH"

WHEREAS, the 2000 General Conference of the United Methodist Church has called our congregations to participate in the "Igniting Ministry" national media campaign, and,

WHEREAS, the national and conference launch of the "Igniting Ministry" campaign will be in September, 2001, and

WHEREAS, the congregations of the Louisiana Annual Conference will benefit from increased awareness of The United Methodist church and from newcomers, and,

WHEREAS, CONFERENCES THROUGHOUT THE NATION WILL BE RECOGNIZING September, 2001 as "United Methodist Open House Month,"

THEREFORE, I declare September 2001 to be "United Methodist Open House Month" in the Louisiana Annual conference and ask each congregation to:

- Alert every member and constituent about the importance of inviting others to church and helping visitors feel at home.
- Participate in our regional training event, April 24.
- Be in prayer for our church that through the messages, which are broadcast, and the hospitality demonstrated, people without a spiritual home will be led to find Christ and become His disciples.

By my hand and seal,

William W. Hutchinson

William W. Hutchinson



Pendleton, *from page 7*

members initiate prayer, I also join in with them. Spiritual care is an essential aspect of medical care that may very well play a significant role in the patient's recovery or sense of comfort throughout each phase of illness and injury."

Is there a connection between outcome and religious faith? "We can't explain everything," Dr. Epps says. "Why do some individuals defy the odds and successfully recover from spinal cord injuries, for example? I cannot say for sure whether God has intervened, but I do know that those with a demonstration of faith are much more at peace with themselves. They are much less anxious about the outcome or about the recovery process."

"We also see that patients who believe in their faith are not only less anxious or afraid of what might happen but are much better equipped to handle a slow recovery or a less than perfect outcome. Additionally, I find that such patients tend to work harder during recovery and are less likely to blame outside factors for their illness."

Dr. Epps also notes an incident early in his career that has helped him approach patient care in a less stressful manner. "A patient's husband told me that he did not expect me to be God, but that as long as I would do the best that I could for his wife, then we could only leave the outcome in God's hands. His words have stayed with me over the years and helped me to realize that we do not always know or recognize God's plan."

"The Church cannot answer all our questions about the mysteries of life, just as science cannot explain everything about illness," Dr. Epps says. "But when you have faith, you can find the sense of peace and comfort in, knowing that one day God will answer those questions for us."

A member of the Cornerstone United Methodist Church for eight years, Dr. Epps enjoys the church's multicultural composition and the fellowship of its members. A member of the men's choir and former board member, he and his wife are also involved in the church's numerous community activities.

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BATON ROUGE, LA

April 13, 2001

Annual Conference meals feature three speakers

Annual Conference June 3-6, will feature notable Louisiana church leaders as guest speakers for three special meals.

Archbishop Alfred Hughes of the Roman Catholic Church will speak at an ecumenical breakfast 7 a.m. June 6. Heads of other judicatories are being invited to this event, which will focus on the church beyond denominations.

A June 5 luncheon sponsored by the Commission on the Status and Role of Women will feature Kay Hutchinson, wife of Bishop William W. Hutchinson, as guest speaker.

The recipient of this year's Sojourner



Hughes



Hutchinson



Pyles

Truth Award will be honored during the noon event. This award recognizes one woman's leadership, service to others, and loyalty to human rights issues.

This year's laity breakfast, scheduled for June 5 at 7 a.m., will be highlighted by a presentation from Ruston District Superintendent Jimmie D. Pyles.

Tickets for the ecumenical breakfast cost \$6 and may be ordered with a form found in the Pre-Conference Report.

Tickets for the laity breakfast are \$7 and may be obtained from any lay leader. COSROW luncheon tickets cost \$7 and can be obtained from Betty Tripp, 109 Arizona St., Lafayette, LA 70501.

Check your mailbox!

soon for the Annual
Conference Housing and
Meal Registration Form

Annual Conference
June 3-6, 2001
Centenary College
Shreveport

INSIDE



Igniting Ministry
training April 24 /8



**Bishop meets
with La. legislators /2**

- ☐ Shreveport
District /4
- ☐ Acadiana
District /5



Field of Dreams



Photo by Joshua Lewis

Dr. Grace Monk, chair of the administrative council at First United Methodist Church, Thibodaux, pastor Rev. Wybra Price and Lay Leader Bill Cain stand at the site of their church's future home.

First UMC, Thibodaux finds fertile soil for new campus in cane field

BY BETTY BACKSTROM
EDITOR

The famed movie quote, "If you build it, they will come," seems prophetic for Rev. Wybra Price and the members of First United Methodist Church, Thibodaux. His congregation's "field of dreams" consists of 19.249 acres purchased on North Canal Boulevard, which are dedicated as the future home

of First UMC's new facilities.

Although construction of a new complex is three to five years away, planning has already begun to ensure effective use of space, time and finances.

First UMC is an historic faith community, with baptismal records dating back to the 1800's. At the time, the church building was hailed as the "tallest build-

ing in town." Ironically, there are no written records reflecting the existence of the congregation around the turn of the century. Immediately after World War II, First UMC experienced a rebirth with the founding of its modern day congregation.

Today's members are faced with the

See Thibodaux, page 3

ON THE JOURNEY

Keeping Sabbath

"It is so hard for us to keep Sabbath." It was at once a statement that called me to accountability and one that brought renewed focus.

I am in Washington, D. C., for a General Board of Church and Society meeting. It is now Sunday morning and I have been here since Wednesday. When we completed our morning worship service today Bishop Ives, president of the Board of Directors for the General Board of Church and Society, rose to greet everyone and give some general remarks about the schedule for today. He began by saying, "It is so hard for us to keep Sabbath." I guess my spirit was so ready for that statement that I tuned out everything else that was being said and just let the thought wash over me. Yes, it is hard for us to keep Sabbath.

When I awakened this morning my first thoughts raced toward all I have to accomplish before I fly home tomorrow. I have two talks I need to prepare that are to be given on the day I return to Baton Rouge. I also have this newsletter column to write (which is already late in being turned in!) I have the appointive Cabinet beginning the day I get home and I am constantly thinking about that humbling responsibility with great intensity. And then there are the commitments I have here at this board meeting that will occupy much of my time today and tomorrow.

But now it is Sunday morning. This is the day of the week we call "the Sabbath" and the day in which we normally "keep Sabbath." But I have work to do!

It is so easy to become distracted from our spiritual life by the demands of our day-to-day obligations and commitments. While those responsibilities are an integral part of our total spiritual health, they cannot become obstacles to our keeping Sabbath. As I have traveled across our Conference, meeting laity and clergy in District Visits, I have spoken to the need for all of us to keep Sabbath. I haven't phrased it in those exact words, but that has been my intent. We must keep intentional about being in the presence of God where our spirits are not burdened with calendars and events, but where we are simply blessed to be present to God's leading. Only after standing in the presence of eternity and tending to the keeping of our souls can we be fully strengthened to do the work of our hands.

I have wanted to be and have made every effort to be present to you in



Bishop William W. Hutchinson

every way I know how. I have loved every minute of it and I cherish the beginnings we are making together. But I am realizing more and more what I have always known to be true. Unless I am fully present to God, I can never be fully present to you. Until I become more faithful in "keeping Sabbath," to be alone with God, I can never be to you all that I can be and desire to be.

Remember the old signs on railroad crossings? They had three directives. Stop. Look. Listen. I, along with you am standing in the midst of one of the busiest railways in life—the church. It is a train that never stops. If I am to serve that powerfully energized entity with the fullness of my being, I must stop. I must look. I must listen. Then, as God touches my life anew with the freshness of grace, peace and insight, I can jump onto the moving cars and ride for another distance before I repeat the routine again.

Oh, I'm so glad I was reminded this morning that it is so hard to keep Sabbath. Just committing these thoughts, inadequate as they may be, to paper has helped provide my own Sabbath. God is wrestling with me for my attention and renewed commitment. I'm working at hearing and responding.

What about you? Do you identify at all with my plight? If so, I would love to talk with you about this so together we can encourage one another to be who God calls us to be—an active presence in the day-to-day world and a regular worshipper at the foot of God's throne. When we arrive at that posture the church will be more able to be the church of Jesus Christ.

The call to us continues to be found in these two phrases:

"Don't just stand there. Do something!"

But first—

"Don't just do something. Stand there!"

May God bless us as we "keep Sabbath" in our journey. . . .

Bill Hutchinson

Bishop meets with legislators



Photos by Joshua Lewis

Bishop William Hutchinson, district superintendents and other church leaders recently hosted a breakfast meeting with Louisiana legislators in Baton Rouge. On the bishop's agenda were such critical issues as children and poverty, gambling, water use and education. Above, Bishop Hutchinson speaks with State Rep. Tommy Wright, D-Jena. Behind them, Rev. Carl Rhoads visits with Sandra Loy and Gerald Richardson, the next District Superintendent for Baton Rouge.



State Sen. Willie Mount, D-Lake Charles, talks with North Shore District Superintendent Rev. Grayson Watson and Lake Charles District Superintendent Rev. Doug Ezell.



Ruston District Superintendent Rev. Jimmie D. Pyles (right) enjoyed fellowship with legislators from his area: Sen. Bill Jones D-Ruston and wife Chris (left) and Rep. Jean Doerge, D-Minden.

LETTERS POLICY

LouisianaNow! reserves space on this page for readers to express their views. LouisianaNow! is not responsible for the opinions expressed. Letters are not to exceed 450 words. Libelous or offensive personal attacks are unacceptable. Letters must include the author's signature, as well as correct address and telephone number, which will not be published, to facilitate verification. Send letters to Editor, LouisianaNow!, 527 North Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70802.



"10-4, good buddy."

First United Methodist Church in Thibodaux recently purchased more than 19 acres of nearby sugarcane field for its new church campus. Though construction won't begin for several years, the conveniences of the new site couldn't come too soon. Above, a teacher directs traffic with the aid of a walkie-talkie as parents pick up their children from the church's pre-school. Parking poses one of the biggest problems for the church in its present location.

Thibodaux, from page 1

challenge of having inadequate space to serve its membership and the community. The charming, 53-year-old church sanctuary, situated on less than one acre of land, seats only 120 worshippers. First UMC is home to 140 families, so both the early and late services are usually full. "We realize that it may be necessary to introduce a third service before the move is actually made in order to accommodate everyone," said Dr. Grace Monk, chair of the Administrative Council.

That same plot of land houses a multi-purpose office building and a preschool, known as the "Little School." "The preschool is probably our most significant ministry to the community at large. Little School has been in existence for 24 years, and is one of the most popular preschools serving the people of Thibodaux. It says a lot when close to 70 percent of the students are not members of the church. Our program really does provide an important outreach," said Price.

Church leaders have recognized First UMC's growing space problem for some time. "Not only is our sanctuary too small, but the preschool cannot expand its facilities because we are essentially land-locked," said Bill Cain, lay leader. The sanctuary faces a busy boulevard with the office and pre-school situated to the side and rear of the church. The complex is tightly situated between an orthodontist's office to one side, and a dry cleaners on the other. "We actually have only 15 park-

ing spaces in our small lot. If it weren't for the generosity of our neighbors, there would be no where for people to park on Sunday morning," said Monk.

Bill Cain chaired the Vision Committee, which took a year-long look at the space situation. The committee was charged with developing an effective solution to the problem after carefully weighing every option. At all times during the process, the committee was dedicated to maintaining a vision for the future of the church's ministry.

"We looked at the possibility of adding space by acquiring surrounding property. At one point, the house situated behind our complex went on the market. It sold for \$125,000. We realized that the cost of buying the property and demolishing the house sitting on it was too costly for the amount of land we would receive. A similar concern existed with a building we considered buying across the street," said Cain.

The committee looked at the possibility of the preschool "building up" by adding a second story. "Again, this plan just didn't solve all the problems, because it did not address the parking space issue," said Cain.

By using Percept information, the Vision Committee was able to determine that the growth area of Thibodaux was in the northern part of the city. They also determined that First UMC was already a regional church, not merely a neighborhood-centered church. "No member lived within a mile of First UMC, so people were not

walking to church. Most members were driving in from distances up to 15 miles away. This just reinforced the concern that the church did not have adequate parking. Looking at the situation from every angle, we began to realize that a move was the most practical solution," said Monk.

With District Superintendent Terry Willis present, the church voted to acquire the land on April 9. On Jan. 31, the close of sale was passed on the property which is located 2.8 miles away from the existing church.

There is much planning and work left to be done before First UMC's building project is finished. "We are looking into hiring a consultant who will make recommendations on what step to take next. We may be advised to build a multi-purpose building initially, or we may move the preschool first. It is not likely that a complete move will take place all at one, so a plan must be developed to decide the steps that are necessary and when they should be taken. The sale of our current facility won't take place as long as we are still using facilities on this piece of property," said Price.

An elderly member of First UMC made a comment to his pastor that continues to inspire Price. "This gentleman told me, 'Although I may not be around to see the finished product, I know that we build this new church facility not for ourselves, but for our children, our grandchildren and the community.'"

Grants to aid churches, disabled members

Incentive grants are available for 15 local United Methodist churches willing to make their facilities and activities accessible to people with handicapping conditions.

The one-time grants of \$1,000 each are being offered through the Health and Welfare Ministries unit of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries.

Grant proposals or requests must be postmarked no later than June 30. Awards will be made by Sept. 30. A church must give evidence that people with disabilities participated in the planning and demonstrate that the project is part of a larger access plan. Other requirements include financial need and evidence of congregational involvement.

Projects addressing the needs of physical (hearing, sight, mobility), mental or developmental disabilities will be considered. Also eligible are projects aimed at obtaining or developing church school and worship materials for children and adults who have mental or developmental disabilities, or for programmatic materials that heighten awareness of people with disabilities and break down attitudinal barriers toward them.

Grant applications can be obtained by writing to the Board of Global Ministries, Health and Welfare Ministries, 475 Riverside Dr., Room 330, New York, NY 10115, or by calling (212) 870-3870.

Rayne Memorial UMC honored as 'excellent'

Rayne Memorial United Methodist Church, New Orleans, was one of 32 United Methodist congregations named as one of the nation's 600 "excellent" congregations, according to the Parish Congregation Study funded by Lilly Endowment.

Paul Wilkes, project director, said the study team looked for churches that express a joyful spirit; have an awareness of and willingness to adapt to the diversity of the members; are welcoming toward and accessible to everyone in the community; and value true Christian community and demonstrate a significant bond among members. In all, 11 qualities served as a standard for selection for this honor.

The project is also planning a "pastoral summit" in New Orleans May 30-June 1. The web site www.pastoralsummit.org provides information on the meeting as well as photographs of the featured churches.

Correction

In announcing the "Visual Enhancement of Worship Space" workshop, to be held April 28 at St. Mark United Methodist Church, an incorrect address was published. The correct address for the location of the workshop is 6217 Glen Oaks Dr., Baton Rouge, LA.

North Highlands church makes ice cream 'Sundays'

What do you do with an old kitchen and fellowship hall that are underutilized and in need of new paint? You get several volunteers together and completely change the area into an Old Fashioned Ice Cream Parlor.

Carla Shands, Education Committee Chairperson at North Highlands United Methodist Church was responsible for this project. She was looking for something different that would help with the program for children and youth. The flooring was replaced with black and white tile to look like a checker board.

The kitchen has been painted red, black and white and chrome and white tables with black chairs were added. Carla, along with help from Jim McGee, Mitch Timmons, Andy Moore, and many others have given the children and youth a wonderful place to gather for food and fellowship. Now an older part of the church has been turned into a vital part of the lives of our members and groups such as the Yardbirds and Saturday Night Alive Gospel singers. The Grand Opening was held on Sunday, Feb. 11 complete with ice cream sundaes for everyone.



Banquet to highlight 'Igniting Ministry'

This year's Laity Banquet for the Shreveport District will be held April 24. Attend this important event and learn about the exciting possibilities for growth due to the nationwide advertising campaign of The United Methodist Church, "Igniting Ministry." Cost is \$8 per person, a love offering will be gathered for the Daughenbaugh-Matheny Scholarship. Register by April 16 by calling the district office at (318) 869-5729.

Spring retreat slated for Conference Center

All college students are invited to attend the First Annual Spring Retreat April 6-8, 2001 at the Louisiana Conference Center. The facilitators will be Rev. Gail Bowman, Chaplain of Dillard University and Rev. Jack O'Dell, Chaplain of Centenary College. Music will be provided by Wayne Kerr. The cost is \$70 per person. Please register by April 1. Call (318) 449-4500 for more information. Contact your Campus Minister if you want to go to this retreat.

Volunteer tutor honored

Chuck Landry, member of Broadmoor United Methodist Church, is a HOSTS (Help One Student to Succeed) volunteer at Atkins Technology Elementary in Shreveport. Twice a week, he mentors two children, helping them with reading and math. He has been awarded the "Betty Scharff Memorial Award" at the HOSTS national conference. This is the highest individual honor given by the HOSTS Corporation to those who have gone the extra mile to help children succeed.

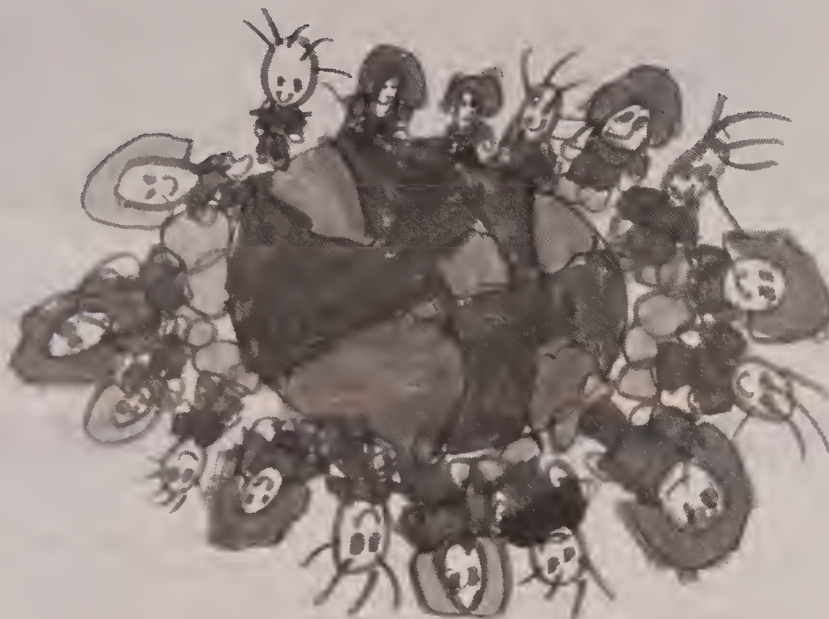


Landry

Contemporary Worship

Each Tuesday from 11:05 to noon in Brown Chapel at Centenary College. The service is led by students. Holy Communion is offered at the conclusion of the service. All are invited to join.

DISTRICT MISSION PROJECTS



Artwork by LeAnne Kerr, 5 years old, of Broadmoor United Methodist Church

The following list is just a few ways we can work together as a district to reach out to those in need:

Johnson Chapel Restoration - Contact J.B. Caldwell at (318) 797-7762

Wheelchair Ramp Ministry - Contact: Janice Flannery at Summer Grove UMC at 686-2514. A workshop will be held April 19 at Summer Grove by Sonny Crawford.

Noel UMC Neighborhood Ministries Food Pantry - contact Jennifer Renix at (318) 424-0434.

Shreveport Bossier Campus Ministry - contact Betsy Eaves, District Missioner, (318) 869-5024. Example: Churches collect toys and clothes for children of college students, or serve homemade snacks during exams.

Broadmoor to host Easter brunch

Broadmoor United Methodist Church College Ministry is hosting an Easter Brunch on Sunday, April 15, during the Sunday School hour beginning at 9:40 a.m. Meet in Anderson Gym.

This summer, there will be a new class: "College Age on the Stage." The

college Sunday School class will meet on the stage in the Gym. Please send addresses, and e-mails for all college students interested in joining this group for the summer. Call Bonnie Daniel, (318) 861-0586 or email: bonnie@broadmoorumc.org.

Who Says Church can't be FUN?

Noel Memorial United Methodist Church held a fun talent show on Sunday, March 14. A delicious spaghetti supper was served to more than 250 people while they were entertained by a wide variety of talent acts. There was a children's skit about Moses' life, youth singing and dancing, poetry readings, and performances by a harmonica play-

er, guitarist, flutist, and pianist. A show-stopper was a demonstration of "Moonwalking" by a well-known city councilman. The Family Ministries Committee sponsored this fun-filled event for the church family of Noel UMC.

Contact Sue Kamm for more information, (318) 869-4319.

Leadership Training in January Huge Success

More than 350 Shreveport District United Methodists attended the Leadership Training held at Broadmoor United Methodist Church.

Over 48 churches were represented at this event. Each participant chose one of the following breakout sessions led by an excellent slate of leaders:

Pastor Parish Relations, led by District Superintendent Rev. William Peeples;

Lay Leader Training, led by Michael Shirley, Noel UMC and Judge Eugene Bryson, District Lay Leader;

Council on Ministry and Ad Council, led by Dr. Ray Branton, Blanchard UMC;

Finance Committee or Treasurer, led by Aimee McFarland, business manager, Broadmoor UMC;

Trustees, led by Rev. Larry O'Dell, Christ UMC;

Stewardship, led by Dr. Michael Reeves, Louisiana United Methodist Foundation;

Evangelism, led by Rev. Pat Day, First UMC, Shreveport;

Missions, led by Mary Jane Bradford, Asbury UMC;

Worship Visuals, led by Mary Dark, Grace UMC;

Church Nurseries, led by Jill LeBlanc, Nursery Director, Broadmoor UMC;

Small Church Youth Ministry, led by Pam Crews, Director of Lay Ministries, First UMC, Shreveport;

Communications, led by Rev. Larry Miller, First UMC, Bossier and Mary Jarvis, Communications Director, Broadmoor UMC.

Coming in May:

Lay Ministry School will be held May 4-5 at First UMC, Shreveport.

Contact Lueburda Myers: (318) 673-7876 or 221-7657.

Send your church's stories to the District Communication Advisor:

Mary Jarvis
169 Patton Ave.
Shreveport, LA 71105
(318) 861-0586



*United
Methodist
Youth Service Fund*

Louisiana Annual Conference

Mark your calendar: May 6, 2001 Is YSF Sunday

Youth Service Fund (YSF) is the United Methodist mission fund supported by youth. YSF provides a way for youth to be in real ministry with each other. United Methodist teens raise money for other teens doing ministry in their churches and communities impacting poverty, illiteracy, delinquency, and social injustice.

The Louisiana United Methodist Youth raised \$13,166.43 in 2000 for YSF.

Recipients of the YSF grants for 2000 were United Methodist Youth Leadership Conference sponsored by Centenary College; Locker To Locker, Changing The World One Teen At A Time sponsored by First United Methodist in Crowley; Appalachia Service Project, Inc., a home repair/building ministry serving Central Appalachia based in Johnson City, Tennessee; and Generations Uniting Together, Exploring Youth Ministry in the

New Millennium sponsored by The College of Bishops of the South Central Jurisdiction.

An offering may be accepted on May 6 or any other Sunday your church designates as YSF Sunday. Offering envelopes may be ordered from the Conference office at no cost to you. "Youth Service Fund Recognition" certificates may be obtained to honor someone in a special way by giving a gift

to YSF. (See related article for additional information on these)

If you would like additional information, please contact:

Carolyn Dove, Director of Youth Ministry for the Louisiana Annual Conference, (888) 239 5286 or (225) 346 1646 or email: cadove@bellsouth.net or write 527 North Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70802.

Web page: <http://www.la-umc.org>

Louisiana Youth and churches contribute \$13,166.43 to YSF in 2000

Contributing churches are listed below by district.

Acadiana District \$419.50

Church of the Covenant
Clanton Chapel
First, Franklin
First, Houma
First, Lafayette
First, New Iberia
First, Thibodaux
Louisiana Memorial
St. Mark

Alexandria District \$469.77

Asbury, Natchitoches
Emmanuel
Fellowship, Hineston
First, Boyce
First, Natchitoches
First, Pineville
First, Winnfield
Nolley Memorial
St. Mark's
Wilton

Baton Rouge District \$2,655.90

Beech Grove
Bluff Creek
Broadmoor
Camphor Memorial
Carpenter's Chapel
Clear Creek
First, Baton Rouge
Gonzales
Jefferson
Lutcher Chapel
Lutcher
Meadows Chapel
Moses Chapel
St. Andrew's
St. Francisville
St. John's
St. Landry

Top Ten Churches in giving for 2000:

Jefferson UMC, Baton Rouge*
Haynesville UMC
University UMC, Lake Charles*
First UMC, Monroe
Broadmoor UMC, Baton Rouge*
First UMC, Baton Rouge
Asbury UMC, Bossier City
Jennings UMC
Carpenter's Chapel UMC
First UMC, Natchitoches*

**One of the Top Ten Churches in 1999*

St. Mark
Zachary

Lake Charles District \$890.70

First, Leesville
First, Lake Charles
Hackberry
Henning Memorial
Holly Grove
Jennings
Jones
Mallalieu
Oak Park
Roanoke
St. Luke-Simpson
University
Wesley, Sulphur

Monroe District \$493.00

Crowville
First, Monroe
St. Andrew's
St. Joseph
St. Paul's, Monroe

New Orleans District \$463.43

Belle Chasse
Bethany
First, LaPlace
Gretna
Luling
Munholland
Shaw Temple
St. Luke's
St. Matthew's
Thompson
Trinity

North Shore District \$220.00

Bush
Elizabeth Sullivan
First, Covington
First, Denham Springs
Hartzell Mt. Zion
Lee's Landing
Livingston
Varnado

Ruston District \$783.31

Arcadia
Farmerville
Haynesville
Mt. Mariah
Mt. Zion
New Hope
Oak Grove
Springhill
Trinity, Ruston
Wesley Chapel

Shreveport District \$1239.90

Asbury
Bayou Scie
Belcher
Bethany
Bethel
Bonchest
Broadmoor
Caddo Heights

Christ
Coushatta
Crossroads
Ellerbe Road
Fairview
Faith
First, Bossier City
First, Shreveport
Gilliam
Grace Community
Greenwood
Hosston
Ida
Jewella
Keithville
Lakeview
Logansport
Mangum
Many
McDonald
Morningside
New Light
Noble
Noel
Pelican
Plain Dealing
Shady Grove
St. James
St. Paul, Shreveport
Summer Grove
Trinity
Vivian
Walker's Chapel
Wesley Chapel
Wesley, Mansfield
Zwolle
DCYM

Other Collections \$5530.92

Sr. High Retreat
DCYM Training
LYMO Training
Fall Convocation
Jr. High Retreat
Sales

SAMPLE YSF OFFERING ENVELOPE

To help your congregation donate to YSF

**They're FREE and AVAILABLE from the
Conference Office!**

To Be Used on May 6th, Order By April 20th!!!

Call or e-mail Conference Youth Director Carolyn Dove at
(225) 346-1646 or cadove@bellsouth.net



 (Name)

United
Methodist
Youth Service Fund

YSF grant supports ministry to incarcerated women and their babies

BY BETTY BACKSTROM
EDITOR

Chaplain and president of Paracletia, Inc., Cathy Arends believes that God has called her to serve those who think, "God does not care for me." Working with pregnant women who are incarcerated and helping young women who are recovering addicts and alcoholics are the two main focuses of this vital ministry.

Youth Service Fund is one source of funding for these important efforts which target the needs of the lost and forgotten.

"Pregnant women who are incarcerated at the Louisiana Correctional Facility for Women are not offered pastoral care by a female chaplain during their time of pregnancy and delivery. These women face many concerns, including the fact that their babies are often at risk for neonatal problems from the time of conception," said Arends.

These women are transferred by facility vehicle, shackled and under guard, to an unfamiliar medical facility to give birth.

Unable to fully celebrate the new life and participate in the nurturing of their baby, these women deal with issues of loss and grief that are often not addressed by nurses and social workers.

Paracletia, Inc. was created to provide confidential, compassionate pastoral care to these women, who feel isolated, devalued, and unimportant to God. This ministry includes, but is not limited to, assisting individuals and families whose hopes and dreams have been shattered through incarceration, physical and mental illness, chemical dependency, miscarriage, abortion, stillbirth and neonatal death.

During the past two years, Paracletia, Inc. has offered assistance to over 75 pregnant inmates. Arends believes that God is leading the ministry to expand its assistance to women after they are released from incarceration.

"When I was working as a registered nurse, I was always concerned about what would happen to the patients after they were released. It is not surprising that God is leading our work with Paracletia, Inc. in the direction of work-

ing with the women once they leave incarceration," said Arends.

After she was released from prison, Tanasa was invited by Arends to attend church with her at Carpenter's Chapel United Methodist Church in Prairieville. The women's prayer group at the church unanimously decided to host a baby shower for Tanasa and her baby daughter, Jasmine. "The fellowship hall was filled with food and gifts. Tanasa opened presents for two hours. Her entire family came, and they were overwhelmed by the love shown," said Arends.

One of the adult Sunday School classes at Carpenter's Chapel UMC "adopted" Tanasa for three months. They have successfully helped her to find and move into her own trailer, and have provided emotional and financial support during her time of transition from prison to the outside world.

The Journey Home, Inc. is one of the half way houses that uses the services of Paracletia, Inc. in assisting their young female residents, who are recovering from alcoholism or substance abuse, in their spiritual journey. As life-long hurts begin to heal, these young people learn to develop personal ethics and become functional members of their community.

Paracletia, Inc. is a thinly staffed organization. Most of the counseling is done by Arends, who has a Masters in Counseling and her M.R.E., and by Paracletia, Inc. Vice President Evelyn Martel, who has a B.A. in Communication and her M.R.E. "It is important that these young women see either myself or Evelyn because of the trust relationship that we develop. Supporters



Chaplain and Paracletia, Inc. President Cathy Arends stands with Tracy and Karen Andre, who are serving as foster parents for Lauryn, whose mother is incarcerated at the Louisiana Correctional Facility for Women. Paracletia, from the Greek word for Holy Spirit, is a prison ministry that devotes itself to the care of pregnant inmates and their children. The organization recently received a Youth Service Fund grant to support its work.

of this program are always needed for prayer and financial gifts," said Ahrends, who is a certified candidate for ordained ministry.

As a 501-c3 non-profit, tax exempt corporation, Paracletia, Inc. receives grants and individual or corporate donations. These donations can be in the form of unrestricted funds for use in the general operating expenses, or restricted funds, which are designated for a particular part of the ministry.

Paracletia, Inc. has identified four ministry areas where help is needed: (1) financial assistance with transportation costs related to assigned caregivers bringing the infant to visit his or her mother, (2) giving baby showers and/or help with infant supplies, (3) offering spiritual and emotional support, and (4) assisting with finding affordable housing

and transportation, as well as creating and keeping a budget.

In addition to these four areas of ministry, families are needed to act as caregivers for newborns while young mothers complete their time of incarceration. She is actively seeking a family right now for a baby that will be born in June of this year. The mother will be released from prison in April of 2002.

"I believe that this is God's project. He is taking us in a slightly new direction by involving us in the lives of these young women once they return to the outside world.

"We at Paracletia, Inc. firmly believe that if a person can be gently helped to stand on her own two feet, she will not find herself back in these situations. I am so grateful to be a part of this important effort," said Arends.

YOUTH SERVICE FUND RECOGNITION

If you would like to honor someone in a special way, why not consider giving a gift of \$20 or more to missions in the form of "A Youth Service Fund Recognition." Example at right. Please copy this form and fill out a separate form for each person being honored.

Send the completed form with your contribution of \$20 or more to:

YSF Recognition
527 North Blvd.
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Phone: (225) 346-1646 x225
Fax: (225) 383-2652
E-mail: cadove@bellsouth.net

Honoree Name: _____

Your Name: _____ Phone (____) _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip Code: _____

Church: _____ Amount Donated \$ _____

A YOUTH SERVICE FUND RECOGNITION has been awarded to

by Conference Council on Youth Ministries

A gift for the mission of the church has been
forwarded to

The Louisiana Annual Conference
Youth Ministries, The United Methodist Church

Youth Service Fund Committee

Date

Youth Service Fund Committee

Youth Service Fund Committee



A Quick Guide to YSF

by Sarah Hoekwater

The United Methodist Youth Service Fund, commonly known as YSF, is a way United Methodist youth can connect to benefit other youth in need all around the world. It is a primary tool for ministry by youth for youth. Who gets involved? Who benefits? Who's in charge? What difference can youth make through YSF? Here's your quick guide to lasting results:

WHO GETS INVOLVED? YOUTH—AND YOU!

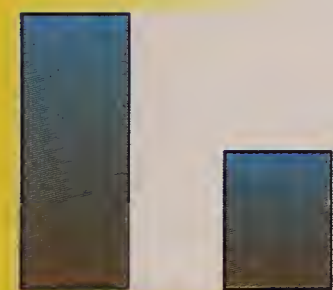
Everyone from anywhere can be involved in YSF. Youth are the primary financial contributors, but they need to be informed, which means you as a youth worker have a role to play, too. A local church youth group can tithe, giving ten percent of the money to Youth Service Fund when they are fundraising for their own needs, for example. The group can do a fundraiser specifically for YSF. Or youth can pledge individually.

WHO BENEFITS? YOUTH!

The simple answer is the youth—youth from all over the world. See the list of projects on this page.

In The United Methodist Church are local, district, conference, jurisdiction, and national levels within the United States. Internationally, there are districts and conferences that get together to form central conferences, which are very similar to our jurisdictions. All of these levels have contact with each other through general boards, which are like the "world-level" of The United Methodist Church.

Most of these levels, in the US especially, have their own Youth Service Fund, as well as their own youth counterpart of this level of their church. These youth counterparts and YSFs almost always work side by side. Each year, the annual conference divides the money raised throughout the conference. They hold onto seventy percent of it. A committee of youth decide how to distribute the funds for youth ministry projects. Some of it stays in the annual conference, and some of it has to go outside the annual conference.



70%
of funds
remain in
annual
conferences
for youth
ministry
projects

30%
of funds
are shared
with the
UM Youth
Organization
for distribution
in the United
States and
around the
world (see list)

Check out the Web at www.la-umc.org for more information on creative YSF FUNdraising ideas and inserts for your church bulletin that welcome and educate members on YSF Sunday.

The other thirty percent of this whole is designated to go to the United Methodist youth counterpart in the United States, known as the United Methodist Youth Organization (formerly NYMO). What this breaks down to is that, of the almost half million dollars youth in the United States raised yearly, thirty percent goes to The United Methodist Youth Organization's level of Youth Service Fund. Once it arrives, it goes towards national and international mission, along with promotion such as applications, brochures, and informational videos that are of use to The United Methodist Church on every level.

WHO'S IN CHARGE? YOUTH!

The types of committees who distribute Youth Service Fund money are similar on most levels of the church. In every annual conference, as well as the United Methodist Youth Organization, the committee that distributes Youth Service Fund money is called the Project Review Committee. Project Review consists of five youth and one adult. The group is ethnically and geographically diverse. Many other levels of the church have a similar committee of youth to distribute the YSF money that they raise.

WHAT DIFFERENCE CAN YOUTH MAKE?

YSF needs the support of all United Methodist youth to be as effective as possible. Did you know that if every United Methodist teenager would give up one soft drink and seventy-five cents to YSF every three months, we would raise \$2,250,000 from that source alone? If committed UM youth gave that much money to YSF every week, we could say "YES!" to six times more life-saving, life-changing projects.



Just
75¢
every
three
months
= **\$2,250,000**

Wouldn't it be amazing to see a ministry like this thriving through the youth of The United Methodist Church? It is possible, but it takes a commitment from everyone, right down to local churches. Then more youth around the world would experience the wonderful love and grace of God, through youth who care and contribute to the Youth Service Fund.

By January 1, 2001, the Youth Organization will have available a new Youth Service Fund video explaining YSF and highlighting some of the most recent projects funded. This will be a great tool for use in local congregations to spread the word about the ministry of youth around the country and the world. Contact the Youth Organization office at 615-340-7184 or toll free at 877-899-2780, extension 7184, for a copy today.

Sarah Hoekwater served as Youth Service Fund Chair for NYMO for 1999-2000. A senior in high school, Sarah is from Concord, Michigan.

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Uskitchitto Retreat Center announces summer camping program

Director anticipates large enrollment

Sammie King, director of the Uskitchitto Retreat Center, has announced the Center's 2001 summer camping program for children and youth. The theme for Summer 2001's camps is "God Is With Us On The Journey." The Cokesbury curriculum "No Matter What" will provide core content for each age level.

Over the last four years the number of persons participating in Uskitchitto camps has steadily risen from 169 in 1997, to nearly 700 in 2000. With five cabins, a 100-seat dining hall, and 100-seat pavilion area, and 120 acres of woodland nature trails, the Retreat Center, serving primarily the Acadiana, Lake Charles, and Alexandria districts, provides an expansive arena for persons of all ages to experience the presence of God.

Pre-Camp Discovery—for those who have completed second and third grades.

Pre-Camp I: June 24 (Sun.) @ 2:00 pm through June 26 @ noon \$80

Pre-Camp II: June 27 (Wed.) @ 2:00 pm through June 29 @ noon \$80

Elementary I: July 9 (Mon.) @ 2:00 pm through July 13 @ noon lunch \$130

Elementary II: July 16 (Mon.) @ 2:00 pm through July 20 @ noon \$130

Jr. High I: June 11 (Mon.) @ 2:00 pm through June 15 @ 6pm dinner \$145

Jr. High Adventure (canoe trip) July 23 (Mon.) @ 2:00 pm through July 27 @ noon lunch \$145

Sr. High: June 18 (Mon.) @ 2:00 pm through June 22, evening \$145

The week-long Senior High Camp is a new undertaking this year. This will be the first time a camp of that length is being offered to senior high youth. Sammie King and her staff are designing an experience specifically for this age group.

"The needs of adolescents are unique," said King, "and we can't serve them by expecting them to meet our needs."

The overall theme for the summer camping program, "God Is With Us On The Journey," will be more clearly focused on the inward experience for the older campers.

"We are all on a journey," she affirms.

"It's not just a journey on the surface, but deep inside, as well. These older kids are beginning to discover that journey, and we want them to experience it here in a Christian atmosphere."

The director for the Senior High week will be Missy Adams, a member of Squires United Methodist Church and assistant principal at South Beauregard High School.

Spiritual director will be Dale Hensarling, pastor of Louisiana Memorial UMC in Opelousas, and music director will be Craig Gilbert of Covenant UMC, Lafayette.

For information on any of these camping experiences, contact Sammie King at (337) 728-5259, (318) 738-4218 or by e-mail: urc@ld.centurinter.net. Conventional mail may be sent to P.O. Box 118, LeBlanc, LA, 70651.



First UMC, Lafayette, to host grant seeking workshop designed for churches

In order to respond to the growing needs of the community, Rev. Spiller Milton, of First United Methodist Church in Lafayette announced the presentation of three workshops on grant seeking designed for churches and other non-profit service organizations.

The workshops will be held July 23-27. There will be a two-day workshop on grant seeking fundamentals; a one-day workshop on how to develop a grant project budget; and a two-day workshop on advanced grant seeking.

"Because of shifts in the way human services are being delivered," said Milton, "it's going to be up to the churches and non-profit human service agencies to fill in the gaps. For the

church, in particular, we are challenged to demonstrate Christ's love for people in some very concrete ways. The challenge may be too great for traditional funding sources. Our church is bordered by the downtown business district, an urban neighborhood, and the university. These are the people for whom God calls us to ministry in this place. These workshops will provide some very necessary tools to do just that."

Polaris Corporation of Greenville, South Carolina founders Cheryl New and James Quick will present the workshop. Since 1984, Polaris has provided grants training and services for education, government, health care, nonprofit, United Way, and other community-based

and faith-based organizations. Organized in a systematic, easy-to-follow manner, workshop information adapts to fulfill an organizations' specific needs.

The workshops will be held in the Social Hall of the First UMC, Lafayette, located on the corner of Johnston and Main Street. The cost will be \$125 a day, depending on how many days and how many workshops are attended. Discounts are available for early registration before June 1 and for registration for all three workshops. The cost includes Polaris workshop materials that can be used after the training. Meals and lodging are not included.

Detailed information will be available on the Polaris website at www.polaris-

grantcentral.net and on the website of the First UMC, www.fumc-lafayette.org. Registration can be done online or write c/o First United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 2039, Lafayette, LA 70502, or call (337) 233-3811.

Forms will also be available through state-wide mailouts.

Send your church's stories to the District Communication Advisor:

Rev. Dale Hensarling
515 E. Bellevue St.
Opelousas, LA 70570
(337) 942-3163

BR church to host women's conference

The United Methodist Women of St. Mark United Methodist Church will host a Women's Conference Sat. April 21 from 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m. at the church, located at 6217 Glen Oaks Dr in Baton Rouge. The theme of the conference, which is free and open to the public, is "Christian Women: Touching the Community through Service and Partnership."

Presenters include: Juvenile Court Judge Pamela Taylor Johnson; State Representative Sharon Weston Broome; Barbara Davidson, director of the Battered Women's Shelter; Roberta M. Madden, director of YWCA Women's Health; Carolyn Weatherspoon, outreach

director for the YWCA; Pamela Metoyer, supervisor for Southern University Health Center; and Angela Williams, Southern University Counseling Center.

Lea Polk, financial consultant with Solomon, Smith, Barney, will speak at 12:30 p.m. Lunch will be provided during her presentation.

Rev. Mary Moody will deliver an inspirational address at 1:30 p.m. After 2 p.m., health screenings will be provided for those interested. For more information call, the church at (225) 357-6150, or contact Marian Griffin at (225) 357-1201 or Edna Brown Hickman at (225) 774-7259 after 6 p.m. to R.S.V.P.

Nominations due May 1 for Sarah Schoeffler Award

The Conference Board of Church and Society is soliciting nominations for the 2001 Sara Schoeffler Peace with Justice Award. The award will be presented at Annual Conference to a person who demonstrates commitment to bringing peace, justice and mercy into the world through service in areas such as political

and human rights, human welfare, environmental justice and survival, peace and world order, and social and economic justice. Nominations should be 200 words or less and submitted no later than May 1 to Rev. Alfred Bakewell, 5401 Cypress St., West Monroe, LA 71291. For more information, call (318) 396-8251.

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—New Address—

On the Web

You can find the Louisiana Annual Conference on the Internet at

<http://www.la-umc.org>

Foundation hosts annual luncheon



The Louisiana United Methodist Foundation recently held the annual meeting of its Board of Trustees in Baton Rouge. Above, William Klein receives special recognition from President and CEO Michael Reeves and Board of Trustees Chair Wayne Gilmore. Guests of the luncheon were entertained with the music of violinist and United Methodist Christopher Thompson, pictured below with Bishop William Hutchinson, Dr. George Jones of First UMC, Baton Rouge, and Dr. Warren Blakeman, retired pastor and North Louisiana Representative for the Foundation.



GBGM grants available for building repairs

United Methodist churches and related institutions are eligible to receive funding for building and repairs by applying for a grant through the General Board of Global Ministries. Cathy Fulwood of the GBGM stated that this is the only opportunity in 2001 to receive funds for this specific purpose.

For applications, contact Fulwood's office at (212) 870-3865. Completed applications should be mailed to Alonzo Campbell, P. O. Box 193, Denham Springs, LA 70727 by April 20. If you have any questions, please call Campbell at (225) 664-7979 or e-mail at ROBUMC@yahoo.com.

Minister/Director of Music Ministry

Broadmoor United Methodist Church in Baton Rouge, a 4,600-member congregation with three Sunday morning traditional services and one Saturday evening contemporary service, is seeking an innovative, enthusiastic, committed Christian willing to work with a wide variety of music groups and programs. Candidate must possess talented music skills, excellent administrative, supervisory, communication and personal relations skills.

Minimum qualifications include a BA degree in music and at least 5 years experience. Salary is commensurate with experience and training. Benefits are provided.

Send a cover letter, resume and three references to Dr. Robert Burgess, BUMC, 10230 Mollylea, Baton Rouge, LA 70815, phone (225) 924-6269, FAX (225) 928-9472.

St. Timothy reconsecrates newly expanded sanctuary with bishop

BY JAN CLARKE

On the first Sunday of the new year the congregation of St. Timothy on the North Shore United Methodist Church rededicated its newly-enlarged sanctuary during services featuring Bishop William Hutchinson and the touring Centenary College Choir.

The \$2.4 million construction project which took a year to complete, doubled the seating capacity of the former worship space from 450 to 900 by lengthening the building and adding a balcony over the center section.

The project also included a 6,500 square foot parking lot addition and six classrooms added to the Family Life Center.

The construction completed by contractor Don McMath of Mandeville required major structural modifications to the open beam, contemporary style ceiling and roof line. The interior now features new hardwood steps and floors in the altar area with a Verdi green cast marble wall to improve sound projection into the 5,130 square foot church.

The color of the central wall complements the sage and soft teal carpeting and pew cushions chosen by architect Jamie Witherspoon of Bradley-Blewster & Associates in Baton Rouge. "The color is supposed to be neutral," said Witherspoon. With the forest greenery outside the expansive glass windows, "We wanted to bring the outside color in, so that all the seasons and holidays of the church will show up."

"I'm so in awe I forgot to get my bulletin," said Jean Olson as she rushed back to an usher who understood her predicament.

"Does it look like the same church?" Celeste Falconer asked her daughter Caroline as they walked through the crowds. Although the color scheme differs greatly from the red shades used previously in the building and the expanse is obviously greater, key elements remain the same in the new design. The pulpit, altar table and stained glass mural window reminded worshipers of the room before the expansion.

"We wanted to capture the same feeling the church had before," said Witherspoon.

"It still has the same spirit because of the people," said Janet Isaac, a charter member who has seen the church grow over the past 25 years from humble beginnings to the 2,500 membership today. "As it has grown, so has the closeness of the people. I have a special place in my heart for this church," she said.

Reminiscing, Pastor Emeritus Larry Madden looked around the enlarged



Bishop William Hutchinson, St. Timothy's Pastor Emeritus Rev. Larry Madden, Senior Pastor Rev. James Mitchell, Associate Pastor Rev. Robert Chance, and Associate Pastor Rev. Brady Whitton lead the congregational singing during the reconsecration service at the Mandeville church.

sanctuary and recalled the first dedication service of this worship building in May of 1989, when he served St. Timothy as senior pastor. "Of course we didn't have the two contemporary services back then," he said. "This is a major upgrade for the future of St. Timothy."

Many agreed that even the previously existing 13 by 23 foot stained glass mural looked more to scale in the larger setting. "The window shows up even better," said another charter member, Helen Triplett. "All in all, it's an elegant job, not overdone. I felt good being there."

But it wasn't only the visual scenery that had the 1,889 in attendance at the rededication's four services marveling at the first showing of the building. A resounding chorus of young and well-trained voices filled the choir loft as the Centenary College Choir from Shreveport, under the direction of Dr. Will K. Andress, performed stirring musical numbers made even more impressive by the improved acoustics.

Many audience members who are New Orleans Saints football fans exchanged glances and smiles as the 60-member choir delighted them with

"When the Saints Go Marching In." Andress didn't have to ask twice for the audience to join in on the last stanza. Other favorite selections were spirited versions of "Ride on King Jesus" and "Dry Bones," complete with percussion instruments mimicking the sounds of bones and creaky joints.

The two contemporary services, held at 5:30 p.m. Saturday and 9:45 a.m. Sunday, featured modern praise songs accompanied by the church's grand piano, bass, and drum combo played by Nathan Pace, Philip May and Tim Olson. At those services two new 10 by 12 foot screens descended from the ceiling to display images and lyrics. A computer driven program, designed and operated by associate minister Rev. Brady Whitton, previewed the technology the new addition can provide to enhance the worship experience.

The two traditional services held at 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. Sunday likewise featured an expanded musical perspective with the introduction of the new three-manual electronic Allen organ, played by church organist Carolyn Conner.

Thanking God first, Rev. Mitchell rec-

ognized some of the persons who played an important part in completing the expansion. Architects Carol Blewster and Jamie Witherspoon, contractor Don McMath, construction manager Danny Brown, and job supervisor Emmet Ross were introduced to the appreciative congregation. Church member Don Connor was given a plaque and special recognition for his valuable involvement in the project.

Bishop Hutchinson reconsecrated the sanctuary and delivered the sermon recognizing the spirit that moved this congregation into this construction project. "You wouldn't have built this facility if you had chosen to be just an observing Christian. You chose to fight the battle," he said.

"This church is an outward sign of dedication. This is an awesome day for the cause of Christ."

"This church was not built to close ourselves in, that's not its purpose. But it's a place where we can come to prepare to go out and share God's blessings. My prayer is to bring honor and glory to God and advance His kingdom on the North Shore," said Mitchell.

Weaver receives Perkins School's Distinguished Alumnus Award

Rev. R. Bruce Weaver, director of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries' Russia Initiative, is the recipient of Southern Methodist University's Perkins School of Theology Distinguished Alumnus Award for 2001.

Weaver received the award, which recognizes outstanding achievement for contributions to Perkins and the church, during formal ceremonies in February at

SMU as part of the school's Ministers Week activities.

Weaver, who earned a bachelor of divinity degree from Perkins in 1947, was lauded for his work ministering to the people of Russia and promoting the acceptance of Methodism in Russia after Methodism was banished in 1928 under Communism.

Weaver developed the Russia

Initiative concept during an 18-month tenure as interim director of the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) as he invited United Methodist churches across the nation to prepare and send boxes of food to help feed the children and elderly in Moscow during the winter of 1991-92. The relief effort collected more than four million pounds of food that was shipped during

a six-month period.

In June 1992, he accepted a new position to coordinate the Russia Initiative, enabling United Methodist pastors and laity to participate in hands-on ministries. Due to support developed through partnerships between Russian and American congregations, nearly 90 new churches have been organized, enabling Methodism to re-emerge in Russia.

Takin' It to the Streets 2001



Members of a Volunteers in Mission team from Buras United Methodist Church enjoy fellowship with neighborhood children during "Takin' It to the Streets" in New Orleans.



Volunteers from Lacombe United Methodist Church construct one of the 22 ramps completed during the recent weekend event.

Volunteers pitch in to build 22 ramps in the Crescent City during annual mission

BY REV. LARRY D. NORMAN
DIRECTOR, VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION

Approximately 230 Volunteers in Mission, \$20,000 in lumber, paint and nails, 22 families in need, and the faith, love and hands of Christ came together March 23-24 in the city of New Orleans. And, the results were tremendous!

Louisiana VIM's annual "Takin' It to the Streets" emphasis returned to the Crescent City this year to build ramps for those who for financial or physical reasons could not realize their own handicapped entrance to their home.

Over the past several months the city's Division of Housing and Neighborhood Development interviewed and selected persons in need of assistance. Partnering with LAVIM's "Takin' It to the Streets" Task Force, led by Rev. Judy Shema of the Tulane Wesley Center and pastor of Napoleon Ave. UMC, they set out to accomplish their mission. St. Mark's UMC in the New Orleans French Quarter, pastored by Rev. Greg Dike also helped spearhead the effort.

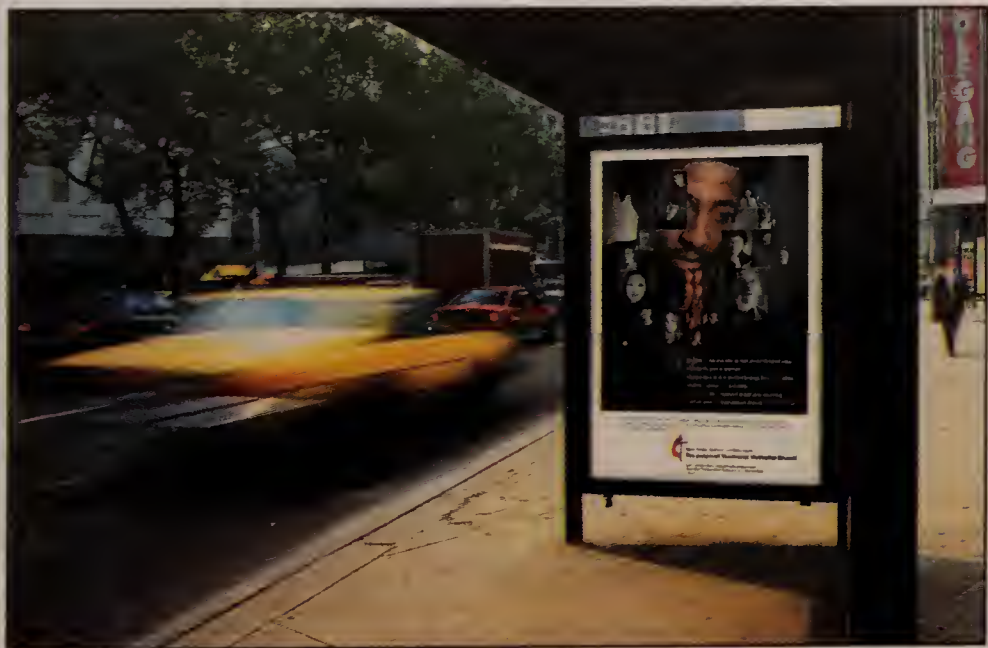
Teams completed 22 ramps and came from congregations in Buras, Baton Rouge, Lake Charles, Baker, Pineville, Mandeville, LaCombe, Winnfield, Gretna,

Algiers, New Orleans, Hammond, Metairie, Ruston, Slidell, Monroe and La Place, as well as individual volunteers from throughout the annual conference. Youth and adults worked side by side to build ramps that not only opened pathways from the church to people in need but now provide a way for those who have been prevented from attending church to do so.

Next year, "Takin' It to the Streets" will be held in the Pineville/Alexandria area. We look forward to the return of all those who volunteered this year and the addition of new missionaries in 2002. Volunteers in Mission will be there. Come, be one of them!



Igniting Ministry regional training is set for April 24 at the Conference Center in Woodworth. The picture below shows an Igniting Ministry advertisement designed for placement at bus stops, only one of the many ways The United Methodist Church is reaching out to the "unchurched" in an upcoming media campaign this fall.



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April 27, 2001

Luncheons to address leadership opportunities

BY BETTY BACKSTROM
EDITOR

Annual Conference, June 3-6, will feature notable Louisiana church leaders as guest speakers for two special luncheons.

Dr. Michael Reeves, president and chief executive officer of The United Methodist Foundation of Louisiana, will speak at the United Methodist Men's luncheon scheduled for noon on June 5 in the Centenary Room.

Reeves will speak on the topic of



Reeves

"Spiritual Leadership."
Cost of the luncheon is \$10. To obtain tickets, mail a check to Joe Kelley, P. O. Box 430, St. Francisville, LA 70775 by May 15.

The W. T. Handy luncheon, set for noon on June 5 at Faith United Methodist

Church, will feature information relative to The W. T. Handy Convocation, set for

Nov. 9-10 at Dillard University in New Orleans.

Bishop Alfred L. Norris, Sr., who is currently Resident Bishop of the Houston Area Texas Annual Conference, will serve as keynote speaker for the convocation. Tickets may be obtained for the W. T. Handy luncheon at pre-conference training, or by calling the Louisiana Conference Office of Special Ministries at (225) 664-7979 or by sending an e-mail to robumc@yahoo.com by May 23. Cost of the luncheon is \$5.

INSIDE

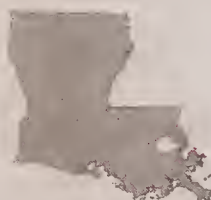


'Great Night of Singing' in Alexandria /4



Clinton UMC adds 17 new members /2

- ☐ Alexandria District /4
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- ☐ World Watch /6
- ☐ In Brief /6



Conference logo embodies presence, energy of Holy Spirit

"Alive in the Spirit, Walking in the Way," is the theme of the 2001 Louisiana Annual Conference session, scheduled for June 3-6. The artwork for this year's journal cover, created by artist Ann Jouett, reflects the theme by using images and colors that portray the presence and energy of the Holy Spirit in the lives of United Methodists.

That energy will be underscored by the music presented at Annual Conference from a variety of musicians and styles of music.

Thomas Douglas, currently on the faculty of both the drama and the music schools at Carnegie Mellon University, will serve as music leader for worship services held during the session.

Douglas will lead congregational singing and play the piano for the Monday night service, which focuses on "Unity in the Spirit" for The United Methodist Church. Featured at that service will be "Faithlink", the contemporary worship band for First United Methodist Church, Shreveport.

Also highlighted at the Monday night service will be Hispanic musical offerings.

"Thomas will serve as the thread that unites us musically throughout the event. He has a disarming way of presenting the Christian message through music and a clear gift of leading people in praise and worship," said Rev. Ellen Alston, chair of the Annual Conference worship committee.

Douglas will lead congregational singing for the opening worship service on Sunday evening.

See Conference, page 7



Pre-conference training sessions slated for May

Clergy and lay members who will be attending Annual Conference in June will learn more about 11 proposed constitutional amendments, several resolutions and the proposed 2002 conference budget of \$6.8 million at the 2001 District Pre-Conference Training Sessions.

Slated for Sunday, May 20 and Monday, May 21, the training sessions will outline resolutions supporting a moratorium on the death penalty and the promotion of clean waters for

Louisiana.

Clergy and lay members who will be attending Annual Conference in June are advised to attend training, according to respective districts.

The training sessions on May 20 are scheduled as follows:

Acadiana, 3 p.m., Church of the Covenant, Lafayette;
New Orleans, 3 p.m., Munholland United Methodist Church, Metairie;
Shreveport, 3 p.m., Summer Grove UMC, Shreveport;

Ruston, 6 p.m., Grace UMC, Ruston;
Baton Rouge, 6:30 p.m., University UMC, Baton Rouge;
Lake Charles, 6:30 p.m., University UMC, Lake Charles.

The training sessions on May 21 are scheduled as follows:

Alexandria, 6 p.m., Horseshoe Drive UMC, Alexandria;
Monroe, 7 p.m., Lea Joyner UMC, Monroe;
North Shore, 7 p.m., First UMC, Hammond.

ON THE JOURNEY

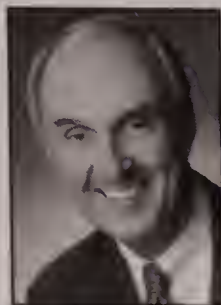
Graced With Your Companionship

Easter in Louisiana! What a glorious day it has been! Services this morning were bursting with the joy of the resurrection. The songs sung were filled with the glory of the risen Christ. The fellowship shared was immersed in the love of God. Easter has truly been a wonderful day. I pray each of you has experienced anew the unquenchable power of God's Holy Spirit and that you have entered the Easter season with new resolve to allow God's grace and love to inhabit you totally and make you completely whole.

The afternoon has been quiet and peaceful. Kay and I had the joy of having Easter lunch with friends and their family and then going back to our home and resting in the calm of knowing we are truly blessed. We have talked with family by phone, read in some of our books and now are settling in for the evening hours.

Tomorrow will be the beginning of another busy week and one filled with opportunities and challenges. There will be meetings with individuals, time with Centenary College, Wesley Foundation Board for Southern University, four days of Cabinet work, Conference Center Board, a District Laity Banquet to speak for and countless other ministries to be performed. But all of them take on a new light as the power of the Easter story pervades all work. Oh that this peaceful satisfaction that we are cradled in the arms of the risen Christ and empowered by his spirit would engulf every waking day!

One of my spiritual guides, Henri Nouwen, put it like this: "In everything, keep trusting God is with you, that God has given you companions on the journey." And God has done just that. I know God is with me in all I do, and I rejoice in the fact that I have been given the sacred privilege of having you, the United Methodists of Louisiana, join with friends and companions from my past to be on the journey with me. I hope you know how honored I am to be graced with your companionship.



Bishop William W. Hutchinson

As I was readying myself for Easter services this morning, multiple visions and ideas were racing through my head. The newness and quickening represented by the day was being manifested in my thinking. I said to Kay,

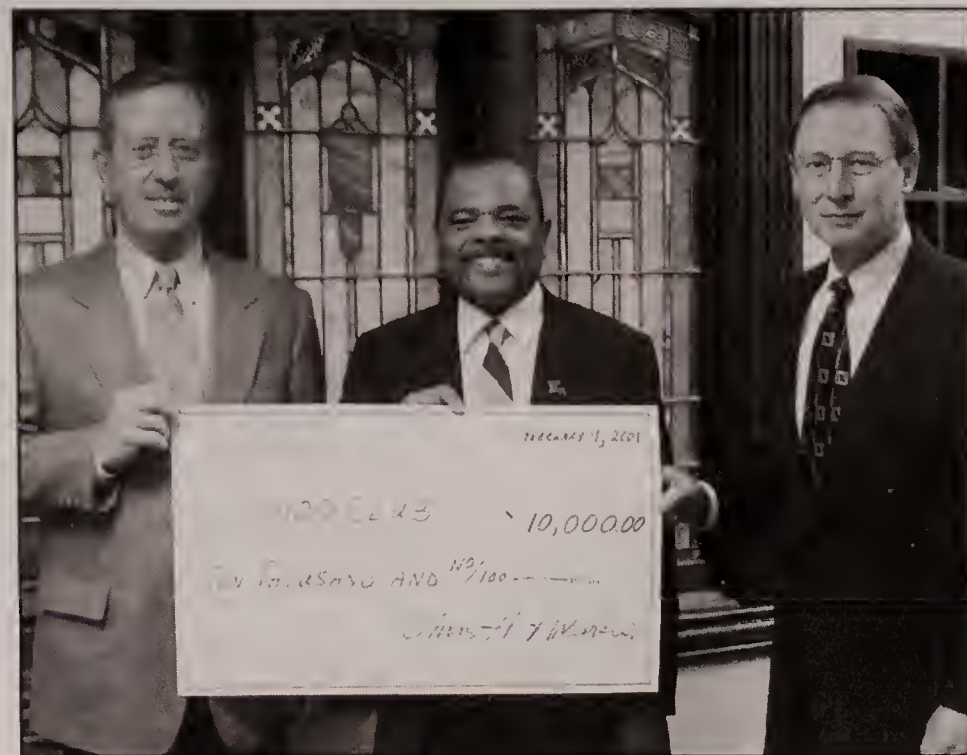
"There is so much I want to address and so much I want to set into motion. I am excited about getting to it over the next seven years." As I have visited with you in the District visits (all of which are now completed) and have talked with you individually, I know you too have visions and dreams for our Annual Conference into the future. I am fully persuaded that God is leading us into tomorrow together as companions on the journey and that if we pray, listen, discern, share and act together we will find ourselves completely immersed in kingdom building.

The writer to the Hebrews has said, "Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds." (Hebrews 10: 23-24 NIV) I commit to you that I will hold us as an Annual Conference "unswervingly to the hope we profess." I beg of you that you will hold me to the same as an individual. I am excited about the many considerations that are before us as to how we may "spur one another on toward love and good deeds." Oh, indeed, God is faithful! Let us be the same.

It is a truly blessed commission we have as "companions on the journey". May God the Creator, Christ the Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit the Sustainer imbue us with grace, commitment, energy and gratitude for the living of these days.

In Christ's love,

Bill Hutchinson



1000 Club

First United Methodist Church in Baton Rouge recently collected more than \$10,000 for new church development in Louisiana during its 1000 Club Campaign. The amount was the largest of any church in the Louisiana Annual Conference. The campaign garnered widespread support from individuals, families, Sunday School classes and Wesley Groups.

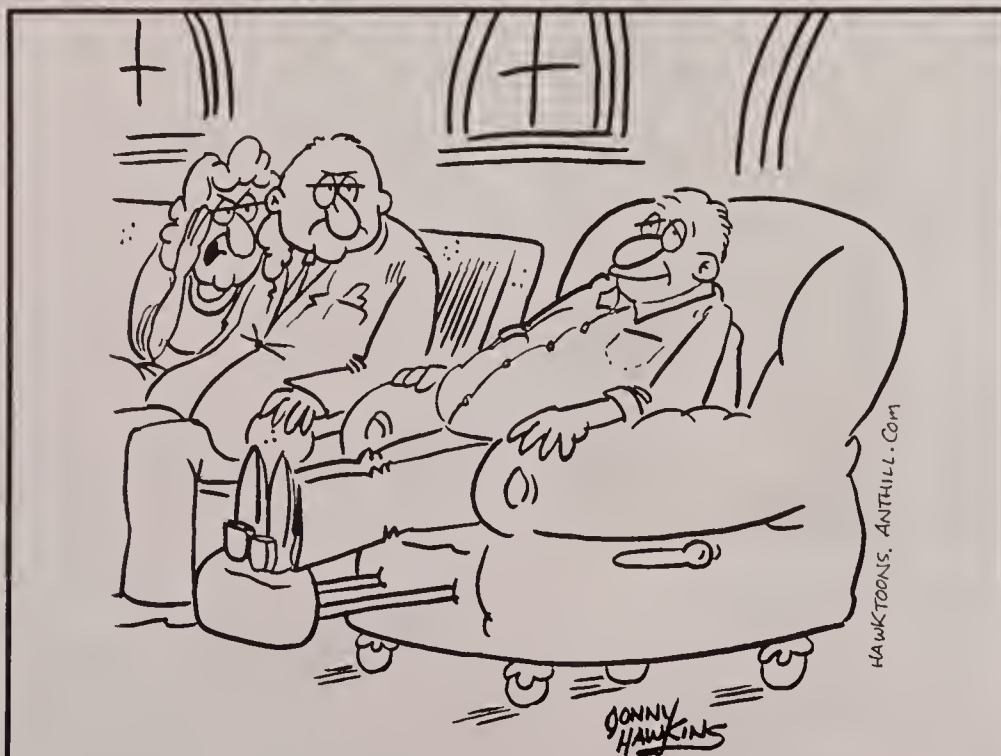
Proceeds help start new United Methodist churches in Louisiana. This year, North Cross United Methodist Church in Madisonville was the recipient of the 1000 Club offering.

"Other new churches are now in the planning stages, and we will be called upon again in the future. This is an important way that we maintain our connection as United Methodists," said Rev. Van Stinson, associate pastor at First UMC. Pictured presenting a check to Dr. Leslie Norris, district superintendent for Baton Rouge, are Jay Little, 1000 Club Campaign chair, and Rev. Chris Andrews.

LETTERS POLICY

LouisianaNow! reserves space on this page for readers to express their views. LouisianaNow! is not responsible for the opinions expressed. Letters are not to exceed 450 words. Libelous or offensive personal attacks are unacceptable. Letters must include the author's signature, as well as correct address and telephone number, which will not be published, to facilitate verification. Send letters to Editor, LouisianaNow!, 527 North Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70802.

STAINED GLASS



"I HEARD IT WAS THE ONLY WAY MABEL COULD GET HIM INTO CHURCH."

Dillard choir to give spring concert

The Dillard University Concert Choir will present its Spring Concert on April 29 at 7:30 p.m. in the Lawless Memorial Chapel on the university campus. Conducted by S. Carver Davenport, the concert is free and open to the public.

The choral unit is composed of 45 voices selected from the University Choir of 100 voices. The choir's repertoire includes classical works from the masters, popular and folk songs and spirituals. The choir specializes in Afro-American songs and pure African tunes such as "Betelehemu." The selection is also accompanied by an orchestra of original African drums.

Featured selections will include Moses Hogan's arrangements of "My Soul's Been Anchored in the Lord," and "The Battle of Jericho." Also featured will be Roland Carter's arrangement of "I Want To Die Easy."

The Dillard Concert Choir is also the invited guest for the Louisiana Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church.

The choir will perform at the historic First United Methodist Church in Shreveport on June 5. For additional information about the concert or other Dillard University events, call the DU Information Line at 816-4357.

Laying the Foundation

Louisiana United Methodist Foundation offers guidance, help with planned giving

BY ROB FAIRLY

We plan our trips, our meals and our daily schedules because we want to make the best use of our time and money. Planning our giving to our church can help us make a more significant gift to our faith than we ever imagined we could.



Fairly

WHY GIVE?

Financial pressure is a reality in our church's daily world just as it is in ours.

- Are your church's operating costs increasing?
- Are programs avoided or cancelled for lack of money?
- Are buildings and equipment maintained properly?
- Is income keeping up with those increased expenses?
- Are special fundraisers needed to meet expenses?

What would life be like if our church wasn't there? Would our children be different without Sunday school or UMYF? Where would we worship God? Where will our grandchildren worship God?

WHAT DO WE HAVE TO GIVE?

Most of us think of income when we consider giving to the church. Our pledge is often based on a percentage of our income.

That's good because our church needs regular income to pay regular bills, just like we do.

Planned gifts, however, are made from assets, not income. We complete our stewardship by making faithful decisions about the accumulation that God allows us to keep. That accumulation may be in the form of CDs,

stocks, bonds, trees, rental property, insurance policies, IRAs, even our homes.

WHAT ARE THE WAYS TO GIVE?

There are as many ways to give as reasons to give.

Wills and trusts let us control our assets as long as we live and make the gift when our physical needs have been met.

Life income gifts can generate immediate income tax deductions and increase income for our spouses and us the rest of our lives.

Gifts from insurance policies and retirement accounts cost us nothing today, using assets after we no longer need them.

We can give our homes now and receive the income tax deduction but continue to live there as long as we like.

DOES PLANNED GIVING BENEFIT ME?

Yes! Planned giving can help us diversify assets, increase income, support parents/family, avoid capital gains tax, stop managing rental property, provide for the future of a wayward/special needs child, supplement retirement income, even set up a college fund for grandchildren.

The ultimate benefit is explained in I Timothy 5:8—

But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith,...

Don't deny the faith, support it with a planned gift.

The United Methodist Foundation of Louisiana is available to serve you and answer your questions at (225) 346-1535 or (800) 256-9317 or on the Web at www.umf.org.



Deep love for God's Special Children is the reason Ken and Judy Warner began a Parent's Night Out ministry to special needs children and their parents. Monthly sessions meet at Francis Asbury United Methodist Church. The Warners are willing to help other churches begin a ministry to special needs children and their families. These sessions give the parents a few hours to do things they seldom ever are able to do.

Francis Asbury UMC ministers to parents of special children

"Our Kids" is a ministry to special needs children and their parents that was started by Ken and Judy Warner, members of Francis Asbury United Methodist Church.

Seven years ago, during a Disciple Study retreat, Warner said that the Lord laid this ministry on his heart. He tried to tell the Lord that he had the wrong person and tried to "run" from involvement.

"After much prayer and in God's time the project got started," Warner said. "God has shown us the right direction to go in and how to administer our program. He is our leader."

One night per month from 6-9 p.m., the church offers a Parent's Night Out program. Judy Warner explains, "This gives these parents a few hours to do things together, or by themselves, that they say they seldom ever get to do. We have been told so many times by the parents how much these few hours mean to them. We continually tell them how much it means to us to be able to spend time with their children, 'Our Kids', as we call them."

The Warners stress that the main ingredient of the program is a deep love for the children. They want the children and their parents to know how much they are loved by the program's staff and by God.

The Warners have been members of Francis Asbury for 16 years. In addition to "Our Kids", they have helped to start another program at a local Catholic church that they report is doing very well. The program meets on a different week of the month giving parents two times per month that they can have time to themselves. The couple hopes to start at least two more programs on the other two weeks of the month so that parents could have a night out each week.

Ken and Judy hope to hear from any church that feels called to this ministry and would be willing to help any church begin a ministry. The Warners can be reached at Francis Asbury at 225-275-4928.

Organization seeks Russia volunteers

MiraMed is seeking 6-10 volunteers to work with the Svir Stroi, Kostroma, and other orphanages in Russia for up to 8 weeks during the period of July 1 - August 25. Volunteers must be self-sufficient, motivated and above all must love and respect children. Russian language skills are NOT required; interpreters will work with participants in each location. Volunteers will teach English, computer skills, or arts and music while working with children at several rural orphan-

ages. Minimum age is 18. Past volunteers have been 21-75 years of age. Volunteers will participate in an orientation before leaving for Russia and on arrival in Moscow. Arrangements will be made by Peacework on behalf of the Board of Global Ministries and MiraMed. The total cost is roughly \$2250. If interested, please call coordinator, Bill De Grace, at (206) 467-1432 or send an email reply to Robert Aronson at raronson@miramed.com.

Hogan to perform with choir at First UMC, Pineville

World renowned composer and artist in residence at Loyola University Moses Hogan will perform in concert at First United Methodist Church in Pineville at 3 p.m. May 6.

Hogan is an arranger, composer, conductor and pianist best known for his

work with spirituals.

The Louisiana College Chorale and the First UMC Chancel Choir will also perform at the concert.

One of Hogan's new, as yet unpublished arrangements will be premiered at this concert.

Guissinger receives humanitarian award

Roger Guissinger, a member of First United Methodist Church in Baton Rouge, received the Powell-Reznikoff Award at a Baton Rouge Council on Human Relations annual awards ceremony on April 19.

For 27 years, the award has been given to local activists in recognition of their contributions and humanitarian service in the area of race relations. Guissinger received this year's award along with Rev. Mary Moody, associate pastor of the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church on South Street.

Guissinger, a retired civil engineer and manager, is executive director of Friends of Families, founded 10 years ago to help homeless families.

The organization provides education and job training to adults and helps families to find housing.

Team mentors provide support to the families being helped by the organization.

Locally, he has served on the boards of Capital Area United Way, Volunteers in Public Schools and the Baton Rouge Association for Community Action.



Among their many church leadership activities, Mike and Donna Deason host a young adults study-prayer meeting in their home.

Provençal couple works hard at church life

An outstanding couple team at Provençal United Methodist Church is Mike and Donna Deason. Mike is Sanitarian, Parish manager of Natchitoches Parish. Donna is a kindergarten teacher at Provençal Elementary School.

Serving as Chair of the Administrative Board, Mike also teaches an adult Sunday school class and places a very special emphasis on Bible study. In addition, he is one of those persons who is always willing to do any job.

Donna, the church pianist, works with the choir and teaches children's classes on Wednesday and Sunday mornings. She also promotes a special children's service on Sunday night. Her special emphasis is on prayer and she practices and speaks about it at every opportunity.

On Tuesday nights Mike and Donna host a Bible study-prayer meeting for young adults in their home. Both of them are always willing to share devotionals.

What a team! The Deasons are a great asset to their professions, their church and their community. Above all, their spiritual strength and their relationship to God is evident to all with whom they come in contact!



Women learn to be filled with blessing

On March 23-24, approximately 44 women of all ages attended the "Come, Drink from the Cup" spiritual retreat at First United Methodist Church of Alexandria. It was the first retreat of this type held at the church and was indeed a blessing for all who were in attendance. The sessions were based upon Joyce Rupp's book, "The Cup of Our Life," which encourages us to take a look inwardly at our faith journeys as if they were cups, created to be filled and then poured out. Each participant created a cup of her own which was used at various times throughout the retreat as a reminder that God fills every cup to overflowing.

Members of the First UMC congregation provided all of the meditations, worship services and music leadership. It was an inspiration to have the women of the church lead the process of filling each others' spiritual needs by sharing their faith journeys and relating in a way that just is not possible in the normal activities of the church. These women came to a new understanding of community when relating to their own church family. As one participant stated, "the hope is to follow up with other relation-building activities and retreats to remind women that we are made to be filled by God's presence and then to pour out His presence to others."



First, Alexandria hosts 'great night' of singing

The Alexandria District's second annual "Great Night of Methodist Singing" was held at 6:30 p. m. on April 5 at First United Methodist Church, Alexandria.

Over 175 persons came together to lift their voices in song. After a welcome by Joanne White, district lay leader, and an opening prayer by District Superintendent William Youngblood, the congregation joyfully joined in singing.

A special district choir was formed which shared several special anthems to enhance the evening of music. The choir and congregation were accompanied by George Gross, pianist, Susan Cauley and John Hutchinson, organists and a brass quartet.

Music leader for the event was John Hutchinson, director of Music and Arts at the church. The United Methodist Hymnal and the new "The Faith We Sing" hymnal supplement provided many wonderful songs for the enjoyment and inspiration of the congregation. This special evening once again proved that United Methodists are a "singing people."

Bunkie confirmation class performs community service project

On January 28, eight members of Booneville United Methodist Church in Bunkie completed confirmation class.

As part of the class, the youth performed a community project. Church Heights, a housing complex in Cheneyville, was the focus of the project.

The youth cleaned the outside premises of the complex, picking up trash and paper.

Mayor Ruby Hawkins assisted in giving the children rakes and trash bags.

Members of the class were April Allen, Candace Allen, Mike Allen, Ronshecka

Allen, Jermaine Blue, Marcus Blue, Michael Blue, and Quinnetta Blue. They were led in their studies by Youth Director Audrey Blue and the youth sponsors, Kathy Allen, Ronald and Constant Allen, Audrey Blue, Elizabeth Grimble and Bennie Washington.

Send your church's stories to the District Communication Advisor:

Myriam Brown
3200 Kincaid Boat Rd.
Boyce, LA 71409
(318) 445-9035

Churches pool resources for youth

The Dream Team ministry faces a familiar challenge for small churches: the need to provide effective youth ministry with limited resources and a small pool of prospective youth.

According to Rev. Ellen Montegudo, five small district churches had seen modest results. The cluster of neighboring churches seemed to find no good answers to their problem until their leaders decided "to do a very Methodist thing."

"Remembering that we are a connection of churches; we are not alone," said Montegudo. "We quickly discovered that our neighboring United Methodist churches faced the same obstacles. It became clear to us that we could accomplish more together than apart."

The churches decided to pool their resources and provide a diversity of youth offerings and a place of belonging

for all. She explained that more participants could make it feasible to provide age-appropriate programming by pooling the talents and skills of both the youth and the adult workers. They found they could provide greater spiritual depth and reduce the costs for individual churches.

"Connectional thinking, along with much prayer and hard work, has made possible a cooperative youth ministry called appropriately 'The Dream Team,'" said Montegudo. "This is a new beginning for Bethel, Francis Asbury, Magnolia, St. Luke in Greenwell Springs and St. Luke's in Baton Rouge."

The churches are seeking a part-time staff person with youth experience to coordinate the Dream Team Ministry. To explore the possibilities, contact Rev. Ellen Montegudo at 225-262-1577 or 261-2789.



Children will lead them

Clinton United Methodist Church recently added 17 new members to its congregation. Ten youth joined as a confirmation class. Seven adults joined, three by profession of faith. At the same service, five other children were added to the preparatory roll through Christian baptism. Pictured with the new members is Clinton UMC pastor Rev. Penn Morgan (back row, third from right.)



Doing lunch

Here's a new twist! Zachary United Methodist Youth Fellowship (UMYF) showed their appreciation to their church family by inviting the congregation to lunch on Sunday, March 25. The UMYF prepared the meal. One way the Zachary church shows their love for their youth is by their strong support of youth activities. Youth Director Cindy White accompanied 14 of the youth to the Baton Rouge District Youth Lock-Out at Jefferson UMC in March. The church will celebrate Youth Sunday on April 29 when the UMYF will lead in worship.



Golden Anniversary

First United Methodist Church in Gonzales recently celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. Gathered to commemorate the occasion were ministers Ken Jacocks, Charles Humphreys, Gary Willis, Joe Rice and Tom Crosby.

Lay Ministries courses graduate 64

The annual Lay Ministries Courses were attended by 64 students representing 23 different United Methodist churches in the Baton Rouge District.

Formerly known as Lay Speaking Courses, the annual Lay Ministries courses were held at Broadmoor United Methodist Church.

Joyce Robinson served as director of the school, assisted by District Missioner LaMarylis Cotten.

Rev. Jesse Means, pastor of Concord-New Hope charge, taught the Local Church (Basic) course, attended by 20 people. The Certified (Advanced) courses were 44 students strong.

Lay Speakers Preach was taught by Dr. Joseph D. Awotwi, pastor of St. Mark UMC. Dr. Mark R. Martin, pastor of Blackwater UMC Church, taught Lay Speakers Are Servant Leaders. The Reverend Tom Dolph, pastor of Baker First UMC Church, taught Lay Speakers Grow Spiritually through Daily Discipline.

The three teachers expressed delight in the attendance and excitement of their groups as they developed their leadership skills.

The 20 graduates of the Local Church, basic course are: Carolyn Antle (Jefferson), Patricia Bergeron (Blackwater), Lee Culver (St. Francisville), Duane Denham (Blackwater), Eugene Ennis (St. Mark), Grandison Gustain (Donaldsonville, St. Peter), Karen Griffin (Wesley, Baton Rouge), Theodore Lotten (St. Mark), Dale Minor (St. Mark), Kasey Pattan (Scott), Ida D. Peck (Jordan), John Pepper (First, Baton Rouge), Norma Reed (Hughes), Mable Rowley (Camphor), Randy Russ (St. Francisville), Nathan Sheehan (Jackson), Jeff Sibley (Blackwater), Alverta Tucker (Wesley, Baton Rouge), Wm. "Matt" Turner (Broadmoor) and Ervin Wells (Wesley, Baton Rouge).

The 44 certified graduates of the advanced courses include: Mike Allen (St. John's), Debra Anderson (Hartzell), Melvin Anderson (Hartzell), Buzzy Anding (Broadmoor), Calvin Beal (Wesley, Baton Rouge), Danny Bergeron (Blackwater), Robin Bettis (Wesley, Baton Rouge), Griffon Bourgeois (Plaquemine First), Tanza Clark (St. Mark), Clovis Collins (St. Mark), Clara Drake (Wilson Wesley), Lillian Dominique (Maringoun St. Peter), Anica Doyle (Scott), James Franklin (Moses Chapel), Lillian Franklin (Moses Chapel), Roy Gasaway (Jordan), Kirby Gordon (Scott), Shemeka Doyle Green (Scott), Leonard Harris (Hartzell), Elton Hayes (Scott), Terry Henderson (Baker First), Oliver Holbert, Jr. (Jordan), Sandra Jackson (Moses Chapel), Thelma Jenkins-Anthony (Broadmoor), Joe Kelley (St. Francisville), Willie Mae Kimbrough (Asbury), Lana Lathan (Wesley, Baton Rouge), Rose Mason (Wesley, Baton Rouge), Danny Manuel (Lutcher), Betty McCarver (Francis Asbury), Florence McGhee (Jordan), Ola Mae Mims (Wilson Wesley), Candis Pattan (Scott), Joyce Robinson (St. Mark), Faye Ross (Wesley, Baton Rouge), Raymond Ross (Wesley, Baton Rouge), Yolanda Royal (Scott), Jessie Rushing (Hughes), Tongia Sanders (Wesley, Baton Rouge), Don Shelmire (Camphor), Annie Stephens (Scott), Linda Trusclair (Hartzell), Walter Weiss (Wesley, Baton Rouge) and Jeff Wittenbrink (Ingleside).

Send your church's stories to the District Communication Advisor:

Lynn Sheehan
P.O. Box 350
Jackson, LA 70748
(225) 634-7810

IN BRIEF

Reports from United Methodist News Service

Council on Ministries names two secretaries

A clergyman from California and a laywoman from Ohio have been named associate general secretaries of the United Methodist General Council on Ministries.

The Rev. Benoni R. Silva-Netto, pastor of Hope United Methodist Church in Sacramento and a professor at the Pacific School of Religion and American Baptist Seminary of the West in Berkeley, will begin work July 1.

Karen S. Adcock, vice president and practice manager of Gibson Fisher Management Counsels LLC in Columbus, will assume her new responsibilities April 23.

Both staff members will be presented when governing members of the council meet in Phoenix, May 5-8. The council's purpose is to "facilitate the church's program life" as determined by the General Conference and "to encourage, coordinate and support the general agencies as they serve on behalf of the denomination."

Social action agency awards nine ethnic grants

ARLINGTON, Va. (UMNS) – More than \$100,000 is being awarded to nine ethnic local church projects by the United Methodist Church's social action agency.

The largest of the grants, \$40,000, is being given to the Rural to Urban Connection: Partners for Growth. The multi-phase program supports leadership development, public policy advocacy and organizing to provide opportunities for black farmers to market organic, affordable produce to African-American urban consumers. The program is a project of Fernwood United Methodist Church in Chicago. The denomination's Board of Church and Society made the nine awards totaling \$114,538 at its March 22-26 spring meeting. Each grant provides aid to one or more ethnic groups.

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WORLD WATCH

Global Justice opportunities available

UMNS — Two opportunities for placement remain in 2001 for young adults interested in becoming Global Justice Volunteers for the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries.

Aimed at 18- to 25-year-olds from any country, the program offers short-term mission experiences of cross-cultural exposure, learning and service, with an emphasis on justice-related issues. Volunteers work in solidarity with members of the community and grass-roots organizations.

The application deadline is June 1 for the fall term, from Sept. 10 to Dec. 14.

Participants must be high school graduates with at least a year of college or work experience; be able to participate in all phases of the group volunteer experience; and show respect for and willingness to live among people of different faiths, cultures and traditions. Acceptance is not based on particular skills but "an individual's desire and willingness to accompany individuals and community groups in their work for social justice."

"If they (applicants) don't fit into the Global Justice Volunteers, we try to get them into another program," said the Rev. Bud Heckman, the board executive who directs the program.

The overall number of individual volunteers for mission programs, especially in the young adult and older adult categories, is increasing, according to Betty Whitehurst, who, with her husband Walter, processes volunteer applications for the board. She noted that students often seek these experiences in the summer or between undergraduate and graduate school or between graduation and a job. Some students even take a semester off to participate.

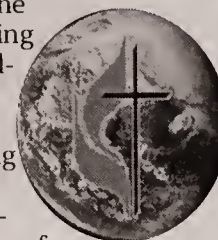
Heckman said the applicants are seeking something more fulfilling than a summer job. "They're interested in gaining a faith experience rather than just getting an income to pay for the next quarter of school," he explained.

Last fall's group of Global Justice Volunteers finished its commitment in December. Sahar Parshad of Pakistan and Sarah May Salen of the Philippines served with the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) in Armenia; Todd Paben of Nebraska and Amanda West of Texas with UMCOR in the country of Georgia; and Carrie Gardner of Illinois and Deniece Williams and Bill Innis of Liberia with the National Council of Churches in the Philippines. Mary Miller of Wisconsin is continuing her work with an indigenous women's group in Costa Rica.

In mid-January, a new group of volunteers — Susan O'Neill of New York, Joy Freed of North Dakota and Angie Meyer of Texas — was placed with Projeto Meninos e Meninas de Rua de Sao Bernado do Campo in Brazil.

A post-program internship at the Church Center for the United Nations is evolving through the board's Women's Division, Heckman said. Carrie Brunken of Texas, a former Global Justice Volunteer in Brazil, is working there.

More information and application forms are available at <http://gbgm-umc.org/vim/features/globalj.htm> online. Heckman can be contacted by e-mail at gjv@gbgm-umc.org or by phone at (212) 870-3825.



Sarah May Salen of the Philippines (right) buys fruit at a local market while working as a Global Justice Volunteer in Armenia last fall. A program of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries, Global Justice Volunteers offers mission opportunities to young adults aged 18 to 25 years.

Louisiana Conference *NOW!*

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Ingleside uses glass, foot washing to enhance Lenten experience

BY REV. JOE DONAKEY
PASTOR, INGLESIDE UMC

Ingleside's observance of the Lenten season was a reflection of some significant moments that members of our Worship Team have had along our spiritual journey.

It also provides a glimpse into the way many of the workshops, events, and trainings that we all have participated in during this past year through the Conference, The Spiritual Academy and our local church were woven together to create a beautiful tapestry of faith celebration and worship!

Our Maundy Thursday service was a perfect place for our new Worship Team to work together to create an experience that expressed our faith and offered others a meaningful experience as well. That was our prayer from the beginning and we thank God for blessing our offering.

Several of our members attended a workshop on creating altars and came home with an awesome idea to provide pieces of colored glass to be picked up from the altar at Ash Wednesday and our first Sunday in Lent. Everyone was invited to daily prayer during Lent. The broken glass was to be a reminder of the brokenness of our own lives. The glass

"As I sat in the chair with my feet in a basin of warm water, I was overcome by this tremendous feeling of being loved."

— Ev Auster

was brought back to the altar during communion at Our Maundy Thursday service. Over the weekend that glass was used to create a beautiful stained glass cross that was the centerpiece of our altar on Easter Sunday morning - reminding us of what God is able to do as we offer up the broken pieces of our lives!

David Graham led the leaders of our church in a training event based upon Five Heart Principles, challenging us to a covenant with one another in creating trust, respect and honor in our work together within our church.

One of those Heart Principles asked that we actively seek to acknowledge the greatness in one another. During the last two weeks of Lent, we provided members of the church with a simple card and asked that we all take the time to write a note to those in our midst who

had served the church in a way that they admired and wanted to acknowledge. They could mail them, deliver them personally at church, or drop them in a mailbox we provided and we would deliver them. This released a great deal of positive energy and was very meaningful to many of us.

Ev Auster had served on a Kairos Ministry Team. One of the most significant parts of the preparation for her ministry was a foot washing ceremony. She wrote a few words about that experience: "As I sat in the chair with my feet in a basin of warm water, I was overcome by this tremendous feeling of being loved. As I received the tender gift from the person who washed, caressed, massaged and gently dried my feet I felt blessed beyond anything I had ever experienced before. I gladly knelt in front of the same chair I had just been

in. I wanted so much for the person whose feet I washed to feel that same love I had just felt. That experience really helped me to be able to serve in that weekend."

We came up with the idea that we would all invite people to come on Thursday night who had been "Christ" for us. We called people who had ministered to us in a special way and touched our lives and asked for the opportunity to honor them by washing their feet. The response was very powerful.

It was truly a moving experience as we came together as servants and honored and acknowledged the way Christ had worked through our lives to bless one another.

We extended the opportunity to everyone attending the service to participate. They could simply give a note of acknowledgement to someone who was present who had touched their life, or they could invite them to have their feet washed.

We plan to include each of these in our annual celebration of Lent each year. We are grateful for the way so many of us received a blessing from these experiences.

Student receives Centenary TOPS

Kirsten Thomas, a member of Pharr United Methodist Church and a senior at Morgan City High School, was recently named a Centenary College TOPS Scholar.



Thomas

The honor includes a full tuition scholarship to the United Methodist-

affiliated college in Shreveport, where she plans to enroll in the pre-med program.

Thomas also received a matching fund award from the "Dollars for Scholars" program of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry of the United Methodist Foundation for Christian Higher Education.

Thomas is the daughter of Phillip and Lisa Thomas.

Conference, from page 1

which will feature the Centenary College Choir. He will also serve as music leader for the ordination service on Tuesday night at First UMC, where Dillard University Choir will perform.

Douglas is remembered for leading the music at the Louisiana Conference clergy retreat in 1999.

Mary Dark, owner of New Wine Design in Shreveport, is designing altars and worship visuals for the conference. Of particular interest will be an altar focal point that will remain visible throughout the business sessions.

"Mary's designs are powerful and moving. She has served in this capacity for several years, and everyone always looks forward to seeing what she has created. This year, a cross and flame is being welded which will actually generate a flame. It will be very exciting," said Alston.

Other musical offerings will enhance the atmosphere at this year's annual conference. Morning worship services will include a daily introduction to the new hymnal supplement "The Faith We Sing." A vocal group, trained in introducing the hymnal, will lead the congregation.

Mike Morris, international



This year's Annual Conference will feature a canvas Prayer Labyrinth for meditative and reflective walks. The labyrinth has been used as a sacred path of prayer and meditation since the 12th century.

singer/composer and member of Church of the Servant in Mandeville, will lead participants in music on Monday afternoon before the lay session.

Two different quartets will be featured this year, including a "cabinet" quartet. College musicians will introduce the campus ministries report.

Copies of the new hymnal supplement, "The Faith We Sing," will be available for purchase during Annual Conference for \$5 each.

CONFERENCE CALENDAR

APRIL

27-29	Academy for Spiritual Leadership, Track One	La. Conference Center
29	Special Offering for Native American Awareness	
29	United Methodist Heritage Sunday	

MAY

6	Youth Service Fund Sunday
13	Special Offering for La. Methodist Children's Home of Ruston

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Tune about meanness receives new attention after school violence

BY TIM TANTON

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (UMNS) – Everyone knows a Howard Gray, and many people have been in his skin, enduring the experience of being an unpopular child tormented by classmates.

The ridicule heaped on a grade-school classmate led songwriter Lee Domann to compose "Howard Gray." The song, which he wrote about 20 years ago, is getting renewed attention in classrooms and pulpits as the result of school shootings around the United States.

The ballad has been recorded many times over the years, and Domann received about two dozen orders for the video after the March shootings at Santana High School in Santee, Calif.

"I have no doubt that the shootings are once again raising interest in it," says Domann, a Nashvillian and clergy member of the United Methodist Church's Kansas East Annual Conference. He is under appointment to a non-salaried music ministry by the conference.

The song is the true story of Howard Ray, whom Domann knew as a boy growing up in Oskaloosa, Kan., a town of about 700 people. The Ray family was economically poor, and Howard and his siblings were shunned by the other children.

"Most everyone I knew put the whole Gray family down. They were the poorest family in that little Kansas town," Domann sings.

One day in seventh grade, Domann went to comb his hair in the boys' room, and he saw that a group of kids had Ray pinned against a hall locker. They had his arm twisted behind his back and they were making fun of his clothes. Domann, who had left Ray alone at other times, joined the crowd and laughed harder than the rest of the kids. Afterward, he felt remorse.

"I wanted to apologize, but I was too afraid/Of what they'd think about me, Howard Gray."

Years later, in December 1980, Domann put the incident into a song. "It was right after John Lennon was assassinated, and just so many people of my generation were going back in our minds, reviewing the past," he says. That exercise took him back to his school days and the memory of Howard Ray. "That was an unanticipated place where I landed," the songwriter says.

"I know it may sound crazy, but now and then I dream/About the eyes of Howard Gray looking back at me."

When the song began getting attention, Domann tried finding Ray. He stepped up his efforts after a Southern gospel group called Wendy Bagwell and the Sunliters recorded the song on Word Records in 1986. For the first time, "Howard Gray" was getting regular radio play. Upon learning that Ray was living in Topeka, Kan., Domann recorded a taped letter to him and included the song. The songwriter told Ray about the healing effect the song has for people.

In a video produced later, Ray says he "cried a little bit" when he first heard the song. He states that he is happy with how his experience and the song are being used.

The two former classmates, now in their early 50s, have developed a relationship and stay in touch. They made telephone contact in 1986, and Ray surprised Domann by appearing at his father's funeral in 1989. A year and a half later, they appeared together in the video, "Through the Eyes of Howard Gray," from Blue Heron Press of Accord, N.Y.

"He's a very, very quiet man," Domann says. "Part of that has to do with self-esteem issues."



A UMNS photo by Mike DuBose

Songwriter Lee Domann (left) visits with former grade-school classmate Howard Ray at Ray's home in Topeka, Kan. Domann composed the song "Howard Gray" about Ray's experiences as an unpopular child tormented by peers. They are looking over letters Ray received from school children who have seen a video of the song. Domann says the song, which he wrote about 20 years ago, is getting renewed attention in classrooms and pulpits as the result of school shootings around the United States.

Ray quit school as a result of the ostracism he experienced and remains illiterate. "The way I was treated and everything, I just didn't feel like going to school," Ray says in the video. "I wanted to stay at home."

He has had a lot of health problems, including emphysema, and he is unemployed, according to Domann. The songwriter says he tries to ensure that Ray receives a portion of the royalties.

The song's biggest exposure has been through the Bishops, a bluegrass group that included the song on an album and concert video. The album, "Kentucky Bluegrass," won a Dove Award from the Gospel Music Association last year.

Domann pitched "Howard Gray" on Nashville's Music Row, where a publisher told him that the song was good but needed a happier ending. The ending has not been changed: "May you and God forgive us, Howard Gray."

La. UMM leader stresses attendance at national event

United Methodist Men from the Louisiana conference will be in attendance at the "2001-A UMMEN Odyssey," the organization's eighth international congress slated for July 13-15 at Purdue University in Indiana.

Among those making the trip will be Joe Kelley, conference president for UMM and member of St. Francisville United Methodist Church.

"My hope is to see a large group from Louisiana heading for Purdue. Dr. Tony Campolo will be the keynote speaker, and other featured speakers will include Bishop Woodie White, Rev. Jessica Moffatt and Dr. Maxie Dunnam," said Kelley.

The energy of this year's congress is already being felt through existing ministries facilitated by Louisiana United Methodist Men. "We have some really exciting things going on with this organization. One of the most unique things we are trying to accomplish is the distribution of Bibles to every



Kelley

member of the local police. Working with the mayor and the sheriff, we were able to distribute a case of UMM Bibles among the local law enforcement officers," said Kelley.

The Bibles, produced out of Nashville, include information on Christian conversion and discipleship, the entire New Testament, the Psalms, and a section on the essentials for leading a person to Christ.

Another area of ministry which is spreading conference-wide is the sponsorship of various athletic teams for youth. Teams, bearing the United Methodist flame and cross on T-shirts and jerseys, are being coached by United Methodist Men and underwritten by their units. "On one team, recently, four of the boys qualified for

the all-star game. Two were from single parent households. We were able to help out financially, making it possible for the boys to make the trip," said Kelley.

For five years, a successful food drive has been sponsored by the St. Francisville UMM which has helped to feed over 300 families and supply food to the Baton Rouge Food Bank. "We have acquired 3000 pounds of rice, and are trying to get over 1000 cans of food. The rice is donated by area growers, and companies like Blue Runner and Riviana Foods have donated cases of canned food. I would like to challenge every UMM unit in the conference to become involved in a similar drive to offer assistance in their area," said Kelley.

In June of 2000, there were 69 UMM units chartered in the Louisiana conference. There are currently 111 units chartered, and Joe Kelley's goal is to see units established in every congregation in this conference.

Taylor to deliver Dillard address

Susan L. Taylor, senior vice president for Essence Communications and former editor of *Essence* magazine, will deliver the address at Dillard University's 132nd annual commencement May 12.

More than 200 graduates are expected to march for the Baccalaureate ceremony Friday May 11 at 6 p.m. in Dent Hall and the Commencement ceremony Saturday, May 12 at 9 a.m. in the Municipal Auditorium.

Honorary degrees will be presented to Taylor, actress Cicely Tyson, Eddie Williams, president of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies in Washington D.C. and Ichiro Yamauchi of Kwansei Gakuin University in Japan.

Taylor was the editor of *Essence* for almost 20 years.

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VOL. 2, NO. 8

BATON ROUGE, LA

May 11, 2001

Pre-Conference Report now available on The Web

The 2001 Pre-Conference Report is now available on the Louisiana Conference website. The report may be accessed in the following manner:

Log on to conference website at www.la-umc.org

Click on the Pre-Conference link in the upper right-hand corner

Follow the directions on this page for accessing Pre-Conference report
"Since every member of the Annual

Conference is related to a church in the conference, I am asking the senior pastors of our churches to supply copies of this report to members who may not be able to access this report," said Carl Rhoads, executive director of Administrative Services/Treasurer.

A limited number of hard copies of this report are also available through District offices if a copy cannot be obtained from the website or from your

senior pastor. Members are reminded to bring their copy of the report to the Pre-Conference Briefing in their District and to the Annual Conference in June.

The Louisiana Annual Conference, "Alive in the Spirit, Walking in the Way," will sponsor a "hands-on" mission project which invites the individual Districts to bring items for "school packets." The

See Pre-Conference, page 2

Mark your calendars

for your district's
Pre-Conference Training

May 20-22

Annual Conference
June 3-6, 2001
Centenary College
Shreveport

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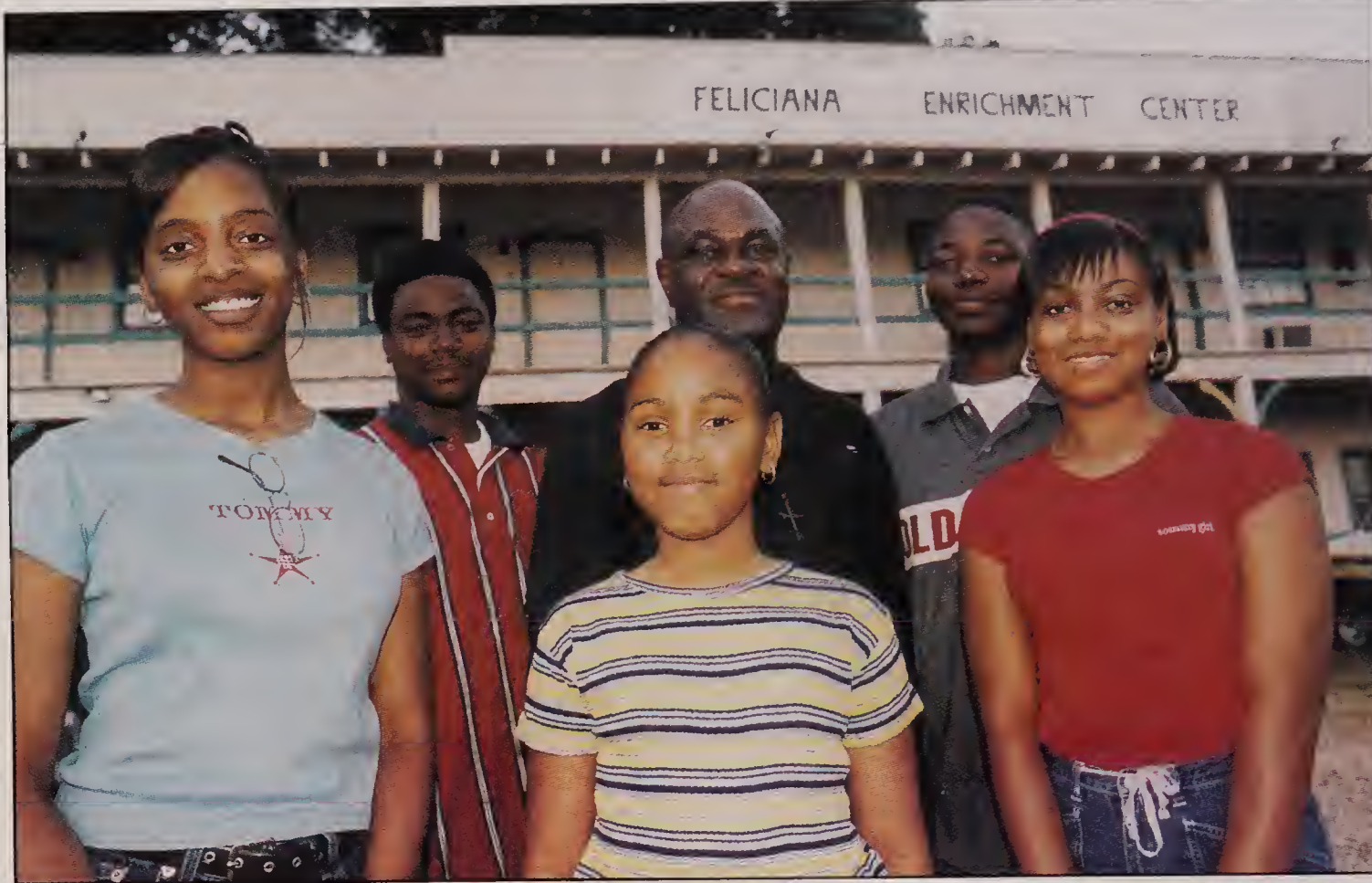


Photo by Joshua Lewis

After his nephew became involved in gun battle with area teens, Rev. Emmett Collins (center), pastor of the St. James-Briggs-Mt. Zion charge in New Iberia helped start a mediation between the youth involved. He also helps facilitate an afterschool program at the Feliciana Enrichment Center near his home in Clinton. Some of the youth that attend the program are pictured with him.

Pastor fosters reconciliation after teen gun battle

Rev. Emmett Collins, pastor of the St. James-Briggs-Mt. Zion charge in New Iberia, will never forget what happened shortly after midnight on his last birthday. Collins vividly recalls the January night that gunshots echoed just outside his home in Clinton. His wife Shirley ran to the front door only to discover that their nephew, along with several other young men, had been wounded in a gun battle.

Collins would later discover that his nephew had been in an altercation that began earlier in the evening at a party held in a nearby facility.

"Two different groups of young men from the neighborhood were at a party, and exchanged words. The coordinators of the party had the police who were serving as security guards ask the two groups to leave.

"The young men wound up next door to my home, outside my sister in law's house. They were arguing loudly, and my wife overheard them. Before she could open the door, Shirley heard gunshots. When she went out to see what was happening, our nephew and our cousin's son had been shot. Yet another cousin was hit by fragments,"

said Collins.

The young men were immediately placed in a vehicle and brought to Lane Memorial Hospital in Zachary. On the way to the hospital, shots of retaliation were fired from the car at the perpetrators of the first shooting. Although no injuries occurred in that incident, Collins' nephew would be booked for the retaliatory shooting.

"At the hospital, we discovered that our nephew was shot in the thigh, only an inch from a main artery. If the bullet

See Shooting, page 3

ON THE JOURNEY

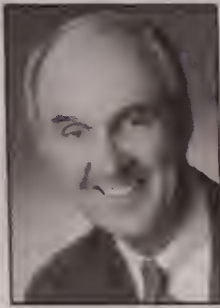
The Fragile Nature of Life

An open casket and an open grave are always solemn reminders to us of the fragile nature of life. On Tuesday, April 24 we gathered as family and friends in the Montpelier United Methodist Church to celebrate the life of Newman Williams, father of John Williams who is pastor at Mount Zion United Methodist Church in Calhoun. It was a rainy afternoon and the light that filtered through the faceted glass windows was subdued and warm. The sanctuary was filled with those who had known Mr. Williams and those who were there because of family members. The music was quiet and reflective, recalling the tunes of yesteryear and the old familiar words of faith. Quiet talk embraced the room as we prepared for the service. Pleasant laughter was heard from many pews.

This was an outpouring of love for the deceased as well as an outpouring of love for those who live. Mr. Williams' family shared their honor and respect for their father and grandfather in loving ways. There were solos by grandchildren and children, and words of remembrance and gratitude from all three sons. Smiles graced the faces of the mourners. They who had sown tears beforehand were now reaping the joy of Christ's nearness and resurrecting touch.

The service finished, we walked across the road to the cemetery and stood quietly in the falling rain as the final words of interment were spoken. Then all exchanged hugs and words of support and we made our way back to our cars and back to our various lives. While the finality of life had been experienced in all of our cultural ways, the continuation of life had also been celebrated in all of our faith-filled ways. It was a beautiful and reassuring time.

Later that same afternoon, when I returned home from finishing up a few things in my office, I was greeted by Kay who said, "I had a wonderful phone call. Little Riley Paige has received a heart donation and they are in surgery right now doing the trans-



Bishop William W. Hutchinson

plant." Blessed words of hope!

Riley Paige is our little great-niece who was born seven weeks ago with a badly damaged heart. Only sixteen percent of her little heart was working. She had been placed immediately on a respirator and then on the waiting list for a heart transplant. On April 24, 2001 the waiting came to completion as she received the heart of another of God's children who was unable to sustain life in the body.

It's all such an amazing and wondrous mystery. At one moment we celebrate a life that has been completed. At another we celebrate life that is just beginning and that has been given the possibility of wholeness. Both of these moments bring a pause for reflection and assurance that we are beloved children of our creator God. The cycle of life is continuous and we play such an important role in it all. Praise God for the mystery and for the reality of life and death!

The apostle Paul, writing to the Romans put it this way: "None of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living." (Romans 14: 7-9 RSV)

As we stand at the open grave or before the glass in the hospital nursery the fathomless goodness and mercies of God are ever before us. May each of you in your journey through life find the living of each day a joy to behold and the dying of each day a cause for great thanks.

Bill Hutchinson

Annual Conference petitions due May 25

If you, your church, or your district is planning to send a petition to the thirty-first session of the Louisiana Annual Conference, June 3-6, please remember that there is a deadline involved.

According to Article I, Rule G of The General Rules of the Conference, "Any petitions, proposed by an individual member or a duly elected body of the local church or a district, shall first be presented to the Committee on Petitions, no later than seven (7) days prior to the opening session of the Annual Conference." (2000 Conference Journal, page 234).

With this in mind, all petitions must

be received by Friday, May 25, that the committee may read and assign the petitions to the proper body.

You will need to provide the conference nine hundred (900) copies of the petition.

Using the petition form that is included in your pastor's and lay delegate's pre-conference report, please send your petitions by U. S. Mail to:

Rev. Mike McLaurin, chairperson
Louisiana Conference Committee on Petitions
C/o First United Methodist Church
119 Jefferson St.
New Iberia, LA 70563

Scholars honored at luncheon



Photo courtesy of Nancy Carruth

Daughenbaugh-Matheny

Eight recipients of the Daughenbaugh-Matheny Scholarship attended the Centenary College donor luncheon. The scholarships, awarded annually to students planning to attend either Centenary College or Dillard University, are a project of the Conference Board of Laity.

Pictured left to right are Jennifer Gipson, Sarah Stringer, Chasity Jackson, Kristen Middleton, Dr. Nancy M. Carruth, financial officer for the Conference Board of Laity, Andrew Sutton, Sarah Williams and Katie McKay. Not pictured is recipient Jonathan Hammett.

Four scholarships have also been awarded to Dillard University students.

Pre-Conference, from page 1

supplies will be distributed throughout Louisiana institutions and agencies which provide ministries for children and youth.

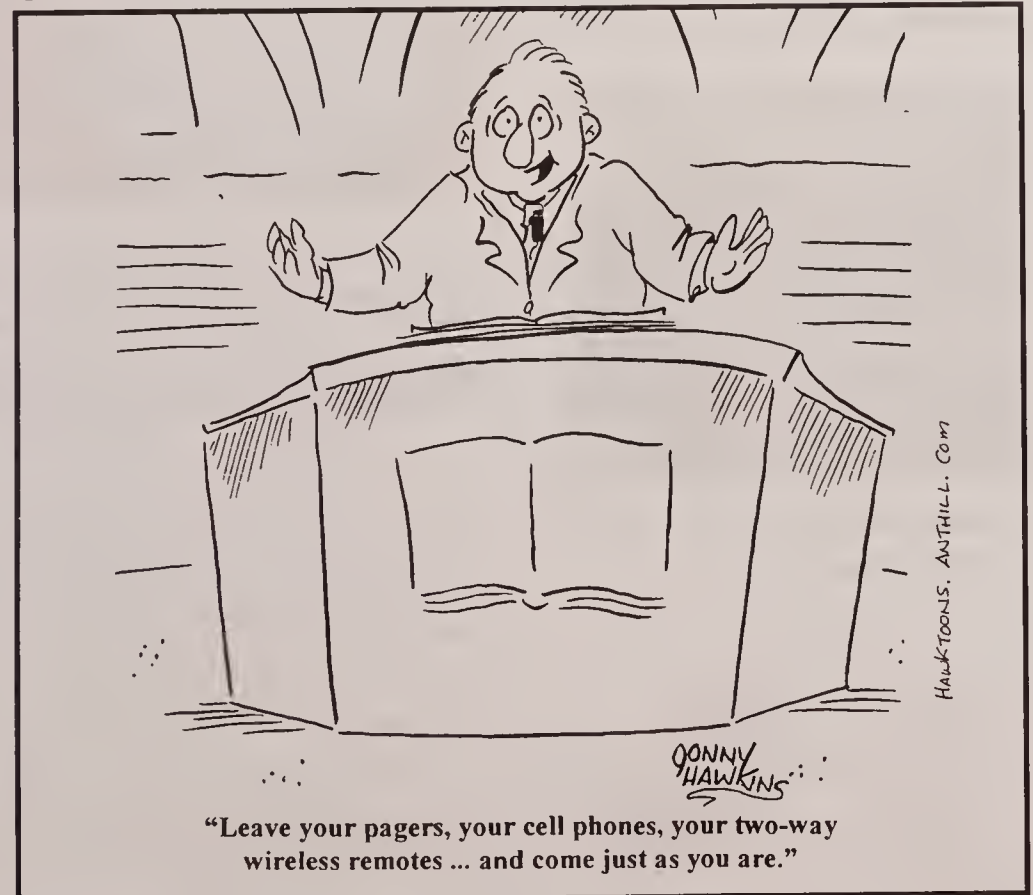
The following items are requested from the respective Districts:

Acadiana, glue or glue sticks;
Alexandria, regular or "chunky" crayons, eight to 24 count;

Baton Rouge, blunt-tipped scissors
Lake Charles, 1/2-inch ruled paper;
Monroe, all colors of construction paper;

North Shore, tablet paper;
New Orleans, two-pocket folders;
Ruston, #2 pencils and erasers;
and Shreveport, ball point pens or washable markers.

STAINED GLASS



"Leave your pagers, your cell phones, your two-way wireless remotes ... and come just as you are."

Training 'ignites' passion for opening hearts, minds and doors

BY BETTY BACKSTROM
EDITOR

Nearly 300 enthusiastic pastors and lay persons in the Louisiana Conference gathered on April 24 in Woodworth to learn more about "opening minds, hearts, and doors" as part of the Igniting Ministry Media Campaign.

The regional training was a key instructional component of Igniting Ministry, a denomination-wide initiative that includes a national television campaign designed to increase visitation to United Methodist churches.

With the use of specially designed "planning" kits, churches worked on learning ways to make their congregations more welcoming and hospitable in preparation for the airing of the television spots in early September.

"I thought the training was very well done. It was eye-opening, and made you stop and think of what churches need to be about. With or without the television commercials, our goals should be to promote the



Gospel and to present an atmosphere of hospitality at all times. United Methodists need to be focused on hearts, not just numbers," said Lynn Morgan of Henning Memorial United Methodist Church, Lake Charles.

Rev. Helena Wright-Butler said, "This event has done more to generate enthusiasm about evangelism than anything I've seen lately. Many of the principals were things we knew, but needed reminding on."

Participants were treated to the exuberant presentation of the material by Regional Trainers Dawn Hand and Sammy Hargrove. Both Hand and Hargrove incorporated a healthy measure of humor and anecdotes to convey the core message of how to improve a church's

evangelistic efforts.

Role playing, question-and-answer sessions and small group discussion were used in exploring the training material. A highlight of the event was the viewing of the television spots scheduled to run in September.

"Some new visitors may not look like us, but we accept everybody as a child of God and we welcome them into the church. We need to be ready to respond to people's needs, wherever they are in their faith journey. Igniting Ministry is one of the most exciting things to ever happen in The United Methodist Church. No matter the size or the financial status of a congregation, there is something that everybody can grasp from this exciting initiative," said Hand.

Louisiana Conference churches may still order Igniting Ministry Planning Kits by calling (877) 281-6535. Pastors wanting to know more about facilitating their church's participation in Igniting Ministry may contact Betty Backstrom at (225) 346-1646 or their District Missioner for assistance.

Shooting, from page 1

had hit the artery, he would have died.

When Collins and his wife arrived at the hospital, they were informed by the police about the second shooting. "We knew something had to be done to improve this terrible situation," he said.

The couple went to the police station from the hospital, and spent the rest of night waiting for the investigative interviews to conclude.

"Even though our nephew was booked for the incident, he was allowed to go home because he was injured. Two boys from the other neighborhood group were booked in the shootings of the three injured young men. They had to remain in jail," said Collins.

That Monday, Collins was allowed to see one of the young men at the jail. They talked about the history of the ill will that existed between the two groups.

Apparently, the disagreements began after a high school football game. The interesting point is that all of these young men played school sports together, and had known each other well. The father of one of the young men who were incarcerated had served as coach to all of them.

Out of this tragedy, weekly parent meetings have risen that address the problems that exist in the lives of their children. The Monday night following the shooting, the first gathering of "Concerned Parents for our Youth" was held at one of the parent's homes. "Everyone was excited. Rev. George Veals from Richland Baptist and

Mount Calvary Baptist churches led the meeting. We met at the home of one of the young men still incarcerated. We discussed how to go about getting the two young men released from prison," said Collins.

Although their appeals to a judge and the district attorney failed, the parents didn't give up hope. The weekly meetings are now being held on Mondays at the Feliciana Enrichment Center. Joyce Kent, from the Clinton Enrichment Center, is now teaching an abstinence program to the young people who have been attending the meetings.

Collins' nephew was recently arraigned in court from the incident. The group also visited the two young men still in jail.

Collins is still working to arrange opportunities to bring the two sides together, such a recent trip out to eat. "As a result of this incident, positive things have occurred. The abstinence program was started, and is going



Photo by Joshua Lewis

Youth at the Feliciana Enrichment Center learn to use computers in an afterschool program supervised in part by Rev. Emmett Collins, pastor of the St. James-Briggs-Mt. Zion charge in New Iberia. Another 'silver lining' to the shooting incident involving local youth is a new abstinence program being conducted at the center by Joyce Kent from the Clinton Enrichment Center.

strong. We now have five computers at the Enrichment Center, and drama lessons and performances are being offered to youth.

"We are in discussion with the Young Leadership Academy about starting a

chapter in Abbeville," said Collins. In addition to Veals and Collins, "Concerned Parents for our Youth" is also receiving leadership from Rev. James Mark, pastor of Pilgrim's Rest Baptist Church in Wilson.

Pre-conference training sessions scheduled for May 20-21

Clergy and lay members who will be attending annual conference in June will learn more about 11 proposed constitutional amendments, several resolutions and the proposed 2002 conference budget of \$6.8 million at the 2001 District Pre-Conference Training Sessions.

Slated for Sunday, May 20 and Monday, May 21, the training sessions will outline resolutions supporting a moratorium on the death penalty and the promotion of clean waters for Louisiana.

Clergy and lay members who will be attending annual conference in June are advised to attend training, according to respective districts.

The training sessions on May 20 are scheduled as follows:
Acadiana, 3 p.m., Church of the Covenant, Lafayette;
New Orleans, 3 p.m., Munholland United Methodist Church, Metairie;
Shreveport, 3 p.m., Summer Grove UMC, Shreveport;
Ruston, 6 p.m., Grace UMC, Ruston;
Baton Rouge, 6:30 p.m., University UMC, Baton Rouge;
Lake Charles, 6:30 p.m., University UMC, Lake Charles.
The training sessions on May 21 are scheduled as follows:
Alexandria, 6 p.m., Horseshoe Drive UMC, Alexandria;
Monroe, 7 p.m., Lea Joyner UMC, Monroe;
Northshore, 7 p.m., First UMC, Hammond.

Dillard graduation location changed

Dillard University's 132nd annual commencement May 12 at 9 a.m., will now be held on the Avenue of the Oaks on the university campus.

More than 200 graduates are expected to march for the Baccalaureate ceremony Friday May 11 at 6 p.m. in Dent Hall and the commencement ceremony Saturday.

Monroe couple ministers to needs of elderly and ill

A Monroe United Methodist couple has opened a new window of ministry to homebound elderly and terminally ill individuals.

Gene and Vicki Tindall, members of Monroe First United Methodist Church, are constructing elevated gardens outside the homes of individuals who require special evidence of God's care and presence in their lives.

Dubbed "Rita's Gardens, Window Sanctuaries for the Homebound," the ministry idea was inspired by and dedicated to the memory of Gene's late sister-in-law, who died of a heart condition at age 52.

"There was a time when Rita was laying in bed and a rainbow appeared outside her window. Gene wanted her to see the rainbow so he positioned her bed so that she could see it," Vicki said.

The "rainbow" event left such an impression on the Tindalls that they decided that a ministry was needed to provide a "gift of joy" to other terminally ill and elderly people who are homebound.

"This is a quiet little project that hopefully will touch people's lives in some small way," Vicki explained about the intended purpose of the elevated gardens they are constructing.

Quoting the Bible verse Matthew 25:40 "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me," Vicki said the elevated gardens provide a "visible sign of encouragement and hope to people who are often neglected or ignored by others."

The first garden was built recently outside an elderly Monroe woman's home.

The Tindalls, along with several of the homeowner's family members from Shreveport, labored in a pouring rain to erect the garden a few feet away from the woman's living room window.

Workers placed a wooden beam in the ground. Several smaller wood crossties were bolted to the beam to support the hanging of plants and a bird feeder.

An expression of delight crossed the homeowner's face when she looked out the window to view the finished garden.

"The gardens provide the homebound with much needed visual stimulus and enjoyment.

"These people often must live in isolation cut off from contact with the outside world," Vicki said.

"Caregivers to the homebound can also look out the window and receive a boost of encouragement by viewing the gardens," she said.

Help with the planning and the design of the elevated gardens was provided by Ken Maki, of the Louisiana Extension Agriculture Center and Pam McConathy, a landscape design architect.

The Tindalls are hopeful that other United Methodist groups such as Sunday school classes will embrace the elevated garden ministry.

"We would like other volunteers to step forward to help build and maintain the gardens.

"We are also seeking financial support for the ministry," Vicki said.

"This ministry is an excellent way to show love and concern for someone, while at the same time remaining quietly in the background," she explained.



Creighton Chandler helps build a bird's nest as part of a ministry to elderly and homebound people in the Monroe District.



Alex and Gene Tindall (center and right) put the finishing touches on one of their new bird feeders.

Hope and St. Paul UMCs get 'fresh breath of God's spirit'

The fresh breath of God's spirit is inspiring new life and ministries at Hope and St. Paul United Methodist Churches in Monroe.

An after-school tutorial program at Hope is one the many new directions in ministry the church has taken in the past year, according to Rev. Jackie Holmes, who serves as pastor of both churches.

Hope recently started the tutorial program to assist children with completing their homework.

"In just the few weeks it has been operating, this program has already shown tremendous promise," Holmes said. "The program not only targets neighborhood children, but any child who may need extra help and some one-

on-one attention."

Holmes said the program has the ability to change the lives of many students at an early stage of academic growth.

"If utilized properly, most students will show some form of improvement within weeks," he said.

"Hope United Methodist Church firmly believes that this program has the ability to give students a head start. The sooner a student learns study skills, the better the chance of getting in and finishing college," Holmes explained.

The tutorial program has four objectives, according to Holmes — to help students achieve academic excellence, to help students learn to maintain a positive attitude, to encourage children to

take their studies seriously and to encourage study methods that can last a lifetime.

Holmes himself helps with the tutoring and counseling of children enrolled in the program. The staff for the program is comprised of church members who volunteer their time and expertise. Calvin Jordan, director of education, coordinates the program.

The tutorial program is held Tuesday through Thursday at the church between 3:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. Snacks are served to the children after every session.

Further evidence of a fresh movement of God's spirit can be found at St. Paul United Methodist in Monroe, according to Holmes.

A children's ministry has been launched at St. Paul during the past year and three new Sunday school classes have been added.

"The youth at the church tell me that they can't wait to get to church on Sunday to see what God's going to do," Holmes said.

As further evidence of the unity of St. Paul members, Holmes said the entire church membership intends to vacation together in July.

Hope Church members also displayed their renewed enthusiasm by applying a fresh coat of paint to the church building, Holmes said.

"God is doing great things at both churches," he said.

Asbury UMM support food bank's senior program

The United Methodist Men's group at Asbury United Methodist Church in West Monroe has lent its support to the Northeast Louisiana Food Bank's "Adopt a Senior Program," for a second straight year.

The group's donation allows the food bank to provide 50-pound boxes of food to senior adults.

The men's group and the church "are glad to help senior citizens stretch their monthly food budgets," said Kenneth May, president of Asbury United Methodist Men's group.

In addition, Asbury United Methodist Church also helps with the "Soup for Seniors" program. Each communion

Sunday members are encouraged to bring a can of soup to help supplement the meals for senior citizens who participate in the "Meals on Wheels" program.

"The Asbury United Methodist Church is happy to assist in fighting poverty in Northeast Louisiana by lending support to these projects," May said.

Send your church's stories to the
Monroe District
Communication Advisor:

Rev. Bill Foster
3900 Loop Rd.
Monroe, LA 71201
(318) 325-7335



A group of Wesley students and their international friend enjoy fellowship together while roasting hot dogs during a camping trip.

Wesley Foundation performs international mission at home

How about a VIM project where you don't have to pack, get shots or have a passport? Well, that is what is happening at the Wesley Foundation at McNeese State University. This year the students at the Wesley are reaching out to a special group of students on campus who are participating in the ESL program at the university.

"It's like doing an international mission project right here at home," said Lindsey Wynn, a student at the Wesley. The students, who are mostly Korean, are here in the United States to learn English. Most of these students have already graduated from a college or university in their homeland. They are here to learn English so that they can obtain a master's degree and better themselves when they return home. For example, one of the students is an executive with a major company in Korea. She will finish her course at McNeese and then go for her MBA.

So, what is the mission? Well, first of all, the mission of the Wesley is a mission of hospitality. Each Wednesday, these students gather for a weekly Lunch Bunch. The Lunch Bunch is provided by the District UMW. Second, during lunch, many topics are discussed relating to culture, Christianity and current events. There is a true exchange of ideas and ideals. Third, these students are invited to share in all of the Wesley activities. They are welcome to drop in during the week and play pool, enjoy fellowship or use the internet. This semester, four of these international students came on our Wesley camping weekend. After returning from camping, the international students invited our students to an evening of bowling. Several joined us for our "Spring Break" mission project to serve food at a local soup kitchen. "Part of our goal is to help them understand our culture and better their English," says Sarah McCain, another student participant. Lindsay Wynn adds, "We are also becoming 'family' to them while they are away from home. One of the couples just found out that they are pregnant. We are planning a baby shower for them at the end of the semester." Through the ministry of the Wesley, a connection was made with a Korean couple from one of the local congregations...and, other new relationships are beginning to form.

"This outreach has been great for the Wesley students and the international students... what a better place to share faith, culture and family except within the context of the church?," says the Wesley director, Rev. Tracy L. MacKenzie.



'Loved' Bunnies

Members of Oak Park United Methodist Church in Lake Charles were busy with various activities during the Easter season. United Methodist Women members Arlene Ware and Theresa Powell joined UMW President Wanda Moss at the dedication of the "Loved Bunnies" donated by church members. All bunnies were given to children living with their mothers at the Women's Shelter as a token of love from the church.



The Lake Charles District United Methodist Men recently met at Henning United Methodist Church. Over 40 men attended the gathering. DeQuincy, Warren, Henning Maplewood and Wesley UMCs were represented.

UMW learn to 'walk in God's light'

BY SEOLA CALLAHAN
DISTRICT UMW PRESIDENT

Lake Charles District UMW recently held its Day Apart at Uskichitto Retreat Center. The theme was "Walking In God's Light." In the Lenten, tradition the group walked the stations of Hope, Grace, Joy, Faith, Peace, and Prayer. At each station, a district officer gave a meditation, and led in singing a hymn of response. Back in the meeting hall, a skit on the Mission Today emphasis was presented. Rev. Marvette Thomas, Jones UMW in Welsh, presented a meditation, and presented Holy Communion. Mrs.

Evelyn Cloutman assisted in distributing the elements. Taylor Phillips, District UMW Vice President was in charge of the program. Over 70 women were in attendance.

Send your church's stories to the Lake Charles District Communication Advisor:

Constance Handy
2706 Walden Dr.
Lake Charles, LA 70607
(337) 474-4187

IN BRIEF

Reports from United Methodist News Service

Duke Divinity School receives \$2 million for chapel

A \$2 million grant to help construct a new chapel for Duke University Divinity School has been awarded by the Duke Endowment in honor of the late United Methodist Bishop W. Kenneth Goodson.

Duke President Nannerl O. Keohane announced the gift April 26. Goodson was a university trustee who also served on the Duke Endowment trustees board and became chairman of the endowment's rural church division.

"Once again, the Duke Endowment is leading the way in helping Duke meet an important university priority," Keohane said. "It's particularly fitting that this generous gift recognizes the many contributions of Ken Goodson, whose affiliation with both the Duke Endowment and Duke University enriched both institutions and whose devotion to the ministry and to training future practitioners to serve others was legendary."

GBGM meeting focuses on international mission

Continued expansion of international mission efforts was a major focus when the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries met April 23-26 in Stamford.

But a future change in the board's leadership also captured the attention of its directors, who took the unusual step of issuing a press release about the personnel matter.

According to the release, the Rev. Randolph Nugent, who has served as the board's chief staff executive since 1981, "has indicated his desire" to relinquish his position by 2004, when the denomination's current quadrennial period ends.

He has been asked to continue his leadership until a successor can be named.

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—New Address—

On the Web

You can find the Louisiana Annual

Conference on the Internet at

<http://www.la-umc.org>

WORLD WATCH

Africa University dedicates new library

BY LINDA GREEN

MUTARE, Zimbabwe (UMNS) — A first-world facility in a third-world country is how Africa University students and staff members describe their new library which opened amid pomp and ceremony on March 31.

More than 650 people participated in official opening and dedication services of the Jokomo/Yamada Library and the Kent M. Weeks History and Archives Hall.

"Our new home is modern and well-equipped and it rivals similar facilities in North America and Europe," said Bilha Pfukani, university librarian. "We are now able to support the learning, research and service needs of both students and staff far more effectively."

Named in honor of Zimbabwe Area Bishop Christopher Jokomo and United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry staff executive Ken Yamada, the \$2.9 million library was funded by USAID through its American Schools and Hospitals Abroad program. A history and archives hall on the third floor of a circular portion of the building, has been named in honor of Kent M. Weeks, Nashville, Tenn. Weeks, an attorney who specializes in higher education issues, is a member of the university's board of directors.

The spacious library is air-conditioned and features wall-to-wall carpeting. It will house 70,000 volumes, a periodical collection, electronic and audio-visual resources and Internet cafe, electronic book security, computerized information retrieval and multimedia resources collections. Half of the total area of the new library is devoted to public services. The first floor holds the reference, reserve and periodical collections and client services desk. The second floor contains

the books and the library administration offices.

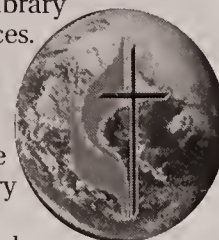
The circular third floor will house an archives collection. When all phases are complete, the library can accommodate 250,000 volumes and other materials.

Visitors to the library are immediately struck by the round, three-floor, exterior feature and the spacious, open lobby. Instead of a staircase, individuals walk from one level to the next on sloping passageways.

This investment in Africa University is not the first for USAID. In 1994 it provided \$1.6 million to construct the faculty of agriculture and natural resources building which also houses the faculty of education and the school of humanities and social sciences. The building, opened in 1996, was named in honor of the Rev. Roger Ireson, top staff executive of the United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry, and former Africa University vice chancellor John Kurewa.

When the USAID financially supports capital developments at Africa University, school officials give it the option of selecting a name. In keeping with the pan-African vision of the university, USAID chose to name the library by pairing the name of an African with the name of someone from another country.

"The honor is to God and to the United Methodist Church in Zimbabwe," Jokomo said. "Anyone listening to the festivities would think that the library and much of Africa University is the result of work done outside of the country. But the church in Zimbabwe played a major role in making the university what it is today," he said.



A UMNS photo

LIBRARY DEDICATION — Church and university officials gather to help dedicate a new library for United Methodist-related Africa University in Mutare, Zimbabwe. More than 650 people participated in official opening and dedication services of the Jokomo/Yamada Library and the Kent M. Weeks History and Archives Hall.

40-year volunteer 'Babe' Teed: 'I just enjoy being with people'

BY ANGELA VANVECKHOVEN

If you ask Loene "Babe" Teed, she will say there's nothing special about her. Church members at Magnolia United Methodist though will tell you that she is one in a million.

Teed, 83, has been a member of Magnolia United Methodist since 1958, and has worked as a church volunteer since her second Sunday there, when she began teaching Sunday school.

Now Teed volunteers in the church office, operates a card ministry that she created, serves as the church's treasurer and does general office duties.

Volunteerism has always been a priority for Teed, who worked in the PTA and her church in Ft. Smith, Ark., before her husband's job moved them and their four children to Baton Rouge.

Teed taught 3- to 6-year olds in Sunday school from her second Sunday in the church until just a few years ago, when she decided that it was someone else's time to teach.

It was at that time that she became the church treasurer and began working in the office.

Teed begins the one-mile drive from her home to church about 9 a.m. and works until noon or "until everything gets done."

She used to take aerobics at the church, but gave it up two years ago when it conflicted with her volunteer work in the office.

The card ministry is a way to reach out to church members, their families and friends who cannot attend services. Teed sends greeting cards each month to shut-ins and to those who are sick. Inside the cards she places drawings that she makes and inspirational stories and poems that she hopes will life their spir-

its.

She sends handwritten notes to church visitors.

Working with the office employees and volunteers is a bright spot for Teed during the workday. "I just enjoy being with the people. Everybody gets along well, and there's not many places that that happens," Teed said.

The Rev. Ellen Montegudo, pastor of Magnolia United Methodist Church, believes that Teed's volunteerism has an enormous impact on the church. "It helps individuals to know that there's someone who really cares about them," Montegudo said, "and she's always smiling. She's just Babe."

The pastor says that Teed has the respect of the church, noting that church services were held up on Sunday while the congregation waited for Teed to change into her choir robe and take her place with the choir.

The church is really important to Teed, and gives her a focus for her life, she said. "This is her ministry."

"She has a real determination,"



Photo by Joshua Lewis

Magnolia United Methodist Church member Babe Teed has spent a lifetime in volunteerism. She was recently honored by *The Advocate* in Baton Rouge as one of the city's 'unsung heroes.'

Montegudo said. "Her spirituality is an everyday kind of spirituality. Whatever emerges, she takes that to God," she said.

Teed has seven grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren, and is the matriarch of four generations of her family that attend Magnolia.

Teed said she doesn't foresee her pace to slow in the near future.

"If you want to set home and twiddle

your thumbs, you can do that," Teed said with a laugh. "There's always something to do, so that's it."

Teed is excited about the future of Magnolia as she sees others take up her spirit of volunteerism. "There are some who are working well in the church, and that's what it takes," she said.

Reprinted with permission from The Advocate, Baton Rouge

Mount Sequoyah offers unique retreat aimed at bringing grandparents, grandchildren closer

"Grand Weekend 2001" at Mount Sequoyah, a unique event for grandparents and grandchildren, is slated for Aug. 2-5. The resident program offers families an intergenerational opportunity to strengthen ancestral ties, grow closer and build memories while participating in activities like scrapbook-building, games and swimming.

Don Sanders, television and community center performer, will lead workshops and perform in the character of

"The Sourdough Cowboy." Sanders focuses on teaching grandchildren how to interview grandparents.

Roger Armstrong, well known Ozark storyteller, will lead activities designed to promote family bonding.

The cost of this event is \$275 for one grandparent and one grandchild. For more information, contact Mount Sequoyah at (501) 443-4531, or by e-mail to mail@mountsequoyah.org, or visit the website at www.mountsequoyah.org.

Brite Divinity School offers contemporary theology study in Cambridge, England

Two sessions of summer school focusing on contemporary United Methodist theology are scheduled in Cambridge, England through Brite Divinity School, Texas Christian University. Set for July 11-24 and Aug. 1-14, the sessions will be led by Doug Meeks, a professor at Vanderbilt, and Elaine Robinson with Brite.

The schools are primarily intended for seminary students but can appeal to senior pastors, youth workers and lay persons. The sessions fall on either side of the World Methodist Conference in Brighton, which takes place in the last

week of July.

Those who have already made plans to be in England at that time could make plans to extend their stay to attend one of the schools.

Both sessions will be eligible for continuing education credit and are advertised on Lifelong Learning Opportunities (www.ecla.org/dm/edoops/) through the assistance of the Continuing Education desk of the GBHEM.

For more information about the program, contact Kenneth Cracknell, professor of Theology and Global Studies with TCU, at (817) 257-7598.

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VOL. 2, NO. 9 BATON ROUGE, LA May 25, 2001

Conference receives Igniting Ministry matching grant

The Louisiana Conference has officially received an Igniting Ministry grant from United Methodist Communications totaling \$47,686 in matching funds toward the local placement of professionally produced television advertisements which promote The United Methodist Church.

In compliance with the terms of the grant, an additional \$47,686 is being committed locally toward the television



buy. Funds contributed by the Louisiana Conference were bolstered significantly by a \$30,000 grant received from The United Methodist Foundation of Louisiana.

The proposed schedule of television

spots, which will begin airing in early September, will receive added impact by the placement of national cable spots which will run during the same time period.

The commercials promote the "open minds, open hearts, and open doors" of United Methodist congregations. Other forms of advertising, such as highway

See Grant, page 3



Photo by Joshua Lewis

Pre-school students are all smiles at Bains Lower Elementary in St. Francisville. West Feliciana Parish is one of few around the state that makes early public education available to its residents. A proposed law would make such programs available statewide.

Methodist senator's bill aims to school kids earlier

BY BETTY BACKSTROM
EDITOR

Sen. Bill Jones, D-District 35, is anxious to see Senate Bill 766 pass the House as resoundingly as it passed the State Senate. With no dissenting votes, Louisiana senators approved the bill which would effectively provide quality early-childhood education to every

four-year-old in those state school districts which opt to participate in the program. A member of Trinity United Methodist Church in Ruston, Sen. Jones is passionate about the bill.

"Senate Bill 766 is the culmination of a lot of hard work by a lot of people, taking well over a year to develop," said the senator. The bill proposes a federal-

ly- and state-funded early learning program that is voluntary, provides universal access, and ensures high quality education for each child. The bill provides for a 10-hour program day for participating four-year-old students. Normal school hours would

See Legislation, page 4

Service to honor 12 retirees during Annual Conference

Twelve retiring pastors will be recognized during a "Passing of the Mantle" service on June 5 at 11 a.m. during Annual Conference. During the service, one retiring elder places a liturgical stole on one of the ordinands to sym-

bolize the passing of leadership from one generation to the next. The stole, an elaborately embroidered silk cloth, was created for this ceremony and is used annually.

A brief biography of the retirees is

provided here.

Rev. Tommy Ray Bergeron, born in Houma, was ordained elder in 1963. Bergeron has served churches in 11 cities, and plans to retire with his wife

See Retirees, page 3

ON THE JOURNEY

The Highway for Our God

I hope the entrance to Heaven is not as crowded as Interstate 10 at 5:00 in the afternoon! Kay and I were going to New Orleans yesterday and it took us as long to get from our house to the outskirts of Baton Rouge as it did to go the remainder of the way to The Big Easy. I don't know about you, but I yearn for wider highways, less cars, more people staying home, or anything that would lessen the growing traffic congestion.

While we were stuck in traffic in what seemed for an interminable amount of time I began to think about the highway to Heaven. If it is as crowded as our streets and interstates it will take

some of us a long time to arrive! On the other hand, if I truly desire the eternal salvation of all people (and I do!), I should pray the highway is so crowded that it will take all eternity to keep everyone trooping toward the golden entrance. Visualizing that I might be a participant in such an endless line of splendor gave me some comfort for the fact that I was going to be late for my appointment in New Orleans!

Speaking of heavily traveled highways, my mind seems to have a huge caravan of thoughts traversing its roads this morning. When I sat down to write this column I had already been interrupted by some fairly disturbing and unpleasant tasks related to the work of the Bishop. While I was dealing with some of those things, both mentally as well as practically, I kept thinking, "And I am supposed to write something for the newspaper that will be uplifting, enlightening, challenging, comforting, visionary, or all of those combined! That will be quite a challenge amidst the clutter these circumstances have produced."

Isaiah, in the opening verses of chapter 40, writes, "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." While we generally think of those images as a word picture for the coming of God into our midst, they also can be applied to our thought processes. They certainly are applicable to me. There is so much that goes on in my world that there is truly a wilderness that overtakes my mind and makes thoughts that completely center on God difficult. It can produce a desert of the highest order that causes endless mental wanderings with no clearly marked highway where our God can enter. And the thirst that develops out of these desert wanderings can be pronounced as I long for a time to just sit and savor God's presence and draw on God's strength for my strength. I long for the ability to prepare the way of the Lord in the



Bishop William W. Hutchinson

"To be effective, a call must be heard, and to hear it we must continually discern our vocation amidst the escalating demands of our career."

wilderness of my scattered thoughts and to have a beautiful and straight highway where God can cut through it all and arrive in my heart and mind.

My little desk calendar for May 8 had these poignant words on it. "God calls everyone who is listening; there is no individual or group for whom God's call is reserved. But to be effective, a call must be heard, and to hear it we must continually discern

our vocation amidst the escalating demands of our career." I guess it is that state of discernment that I am missing sometimes in the midst of the "escalating demands of my career."

What about you? How is the wilderness of your life? Is it growing with tangles and thorns? Or are you able to prepare the way of the Lord through it all and make straight in the desert of overcrowded schedules and barren study and prayer a highway where God can enter your life? I pray for you that your "uneven ground shall become level, the rough places a plain" and that the glory of the Lord shall be revealed (Isaiah 40:4b-5a).

One of the things I am excitedly looking forward to is being at Annual Conference with so many of you. It will be the first full gathering from the many areas of our state in which I will be able to share with you in worship, fellowship and vision. It is my prayer that this gathering will be a fertile valley and that the highway that leads to it and through it will be wide and smooth and that God's great Spirit will invade our spirits and give us a great few days together. In the meantime, I am desperately trying to clear the clutter from my spirit and mind so that I might hear God's call and word to me and that I might respond with willingness and openness that will enable me to provide Godly leadership. I so desire to be of discerning mind and strengthened heart.

It's been challenging to try and get these thoughts collected enough to send them to you. Prayerfully they will make some sense and will be at least a small trail that begins to lead to that place where God's entrance into our lives is made more accessible within each of us. It's quite a journey to wander in the desert as well as to have the humble joy of seeing the promised land and desiring to enter it fully!

Bill Hutchinson

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Youth leader writes of the importance of listening and learning from youth

Can we really believe it was recently the second anniversary of the Columbine school shootings? It seems like just a few short months ago we were preparing for the expected rash of shootings by troubled teens seeking the same notoriety as the Columbine shooters on the first anniversary. I can't remember if there were any incidents last year. This year will give me enough to think about. Our church youth group was given tickets to see a local non-denominational drama titled "Beyond the Grave" dramatizing the Columbine massacre. As an adult youth leader, I went with the group out of my own curiosity and to help stabilize the group or answer any questions about this play if they needed help.

It is my opinion that the intent of the drama was to show the need to live a Christian life to ensure your place in heaven if at any moment you should die. Out of the five victims murdered in the play, 3 went to heaven and 2 went to hell. The murders were graphically displayed with copious amounts of fake blood, enough gun shots to kill a small army and actors portraying traumatized teens and parents.

The play apparently had the desired shock effect. About half of the audience, mostly under the age of 15 made the trek to the alter professing their new found faith. I wish them well, as I am Christian and believe deeply in God and Jesus Christ, but I wonder if this effort was misplaced. This was on a Saturday and as most of us know on Friday, there was a school shooting very close to us in Monroe. Thank God there were no fatalities or serious injuries. The next day, the mock Columbine drill was staged at Donnie Bickham School. Again, I wonder if this effort, with all the swat police, ambulances and even an armored car, was misplaced.

The 14-year-old Pennsylvania girl who shot a popular cheerleader had posters of Christ and Martin Luther King Jr. on her bedroom walls. She had transferred to a Catholic school last year because students at her hometown school stoned her and called her vicious names. Andy Williams, the 15-year-old accused of killing two and wounding 13 at his Santee, Ca., high school made his first court appearance alone. Neither his mother nor father, who are separated, attended the hearing. The clear implication is this kid has been operating without the safety net of a family for a long time.

What becomes clear in the aftermath of the majority of these school shootings is that there are vast numbers of bitter, troubled youth and by the grace of God, only a relatively few have made the headlines.

The effort to fortify the schools and train the swat teams clearly cannot prevent the occurrence of the tragedies in the numbers that the attention of caring, loving adult role models can. In April, Darrel Scott, the father of Rachel Scott, one of the Columbine High School shooting victims, was invited and spoke at in front of the House Judiciary committee sub-committee. What he said was painfully truthful and are worthy of study:

"Their (victims') blood screams out for answers. The first recorded act of violence was when Cain slew Abel. The villain was not the club Cain used....the reason for the murder was in Cain's heart. I am here today to declare that Columbine was not just a tragedy, it was a spiritual event that should be forcing us to look where the real blame lies. Much of the blame lies here in this room. Much of the blame lies behind the pointing fingers of the accusers themselves."

Mr. Scott goes on point out that scapegoats such as the NRA are not to blame. Likewise more restrictive laws and million dollar churches and "gaudy television evangelists spewing out verbal religious garbage" are not the answer. He does profess that "a change of heart and a humble acknowledgment that this nation was founded on the principle of simple trust in God" is the key to addressing this ill of society. Again in his words:

"As my son Craig lay under the table in the school library and saw his two friends murdered before his eyes, he did not hesitate to pray in school. I defy any law or politician to deny him that right!"

There is more to Mr. Scott's speech that certainly bears study. The only addition to this compelling story I can make is that we as adults, parents, law makers, religious leaders have the responsibility to watch, listen to and learn from our youth. Do not let these screams of despair and mistrust from our youth go on with the lonely court appearance of a 15-year-old. Replace the fear and mistrust in our youth with compassion and caring and you will do more good than any law, swat team, Christian scare tactics or metal detector will ever do.

Milton Geltz
North Highlands United Methodist Church, Shreveport

LETTERS POLICY

LouisianaNow! reserves space on this page for readers to express their views. LouisianaNow! is not responsible for the opinions expressed. Letters should not exceed 450 words. Libelous or offensive personal attacks are unacceptable. Letters must include the author's signature, as well as correct address and telephone number, which will not be published, to facilitate verification. Send letters to Editor, LouisianaNow!, 527 North Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70802.

Youth Ministry nets 4,000 requests with *La. Now!* insert



Photo by Joshua Lewis

Louisiana Conference Director of Youth Ministry Carolyn Dove and her assistant Shirlene Spears display the Youth Service Fund insert recently placed in *Louisiana Now!*. Requests for fundraising envelopes from Youth Ministry rose from 300 after last year's conventional mailing to nearly 4,000 after the Conference newspaper insert ran.

Carolyn Dove, director of Youth Ministry for the Louisiana Conference, was pleasantly surprised with the response her office received to a recent four-page insert in *Louisiana Now!* which focused on the Youth Service Fund.

"Every year, we publicize YSF through a direct mail piece sent to youth directors, youth coordinators and the conference youth team. Last year's solicitation generated a request for around 300 envelopes for Youth Service Fund givings. This year's publicity, which consisted only of the advertising insert in *Louisiana Now!*, has generated requests for nearly 4,000 envelopes to date. Not only is the number significantly larger, the response has been much more immediate than in previous years," said Dove.

In addition to the increase in demand for envelopes, more special recognition certificates have been requested than ever before.

"The beauty of using this form of communication is that it is actually cheaper than using direct mail. Also, by ordering extra copies of the paper, I now have extra inserts to use at DCYM training. The four-page piece does a great job of sharing the YSF 'story', so I give an insert to each of the District YSF chairpersons, who in turn take it back to their churches and use it for promotion. All the information they need is in an informative, attractive and concise package," said Dove.

"Astronomical" is the word she uses in comparing this year's response to that of previous years. "People would say, 'I never saw any information on this,' or 'My church never gave me anything.'"

"Using an insert in *Louisiana Now!* is right on target for items that need to go directly to the local churches," said Dove.

Grant, from page 1

billboards, will be used in addition to the TV advertisements. The vision of the Igniting Ministry initiative in Louisiana is to make the presence of The United Methodist Church known in every district throughout the conference.

This campaign, through advertising and enhancement of local church efforts, increases the ability to reach and recruit the "unchurched," while strengthening the commitment of United Methodists to the church's ministry.

In preparation for September, which has been proclaimed by bishops around the country as "United Methodist Open House Month," nearly 300 conference

pastors and lay persons recently gathered at the Conference Center in Woodworth for an Igniting Ministry Regional Training.

The event focused on the use of specially designed planning kits, with churches learning ways to make their congregations more welcoming.

Louisiana Conference churches may still order Igniting Ministry Planning Kits by calling (877) 281-6535.

Pastors wanting to know more about facilitating their church's participation in Igniting Ministry may contact Betty Backstrom at (225) 346-1646 and by e-mail at lanow@bellsouth.net or their district missionary for assistance.

Retirees, from page 1



Bergeron



Brown



Gentry



Huber



Jones



McClain



Norris



Olmsted



Reagan



Scott



Simmons



Wade

Peggy in Baton Rouge.

The first career for **Margaret Brown** spanned 30 years working in Civil Service. After raising her five children, Rev. Brown became a United Methodist pastor. She initially served in a part-time capacity, eventually serving for nine years as a full-time minister.

Rev. Don Gentry did not enter the ministry until he was 56 years old. His brief career as a pastor has been the most satisfying of all his careers, claims Gentry. In retirement, he will continue to serve New Roads and Rosedale until June of 2002. Don and his wife Mildred will spend time between New Roads and Estes Park, Col.

Married to Rev. Sandra Huber, **Rev. James Huber** has pastored six appointments in the Louisiana conference, including a stint as co-pastor with his wife while serving in Shreveport.

Huber writes, "The Rev. Sandra Huber has graciously agreed to continue under appointment in the Shreveport District so I will be able to fish."

Eight appointments have been served by **Rev. Frank M. Jones**, the last being First UMC, Bastrop and Reily Memorial.

He served eight years on the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry and 12 years on the District Board. Jones and his wife Dyann will move to Minden to be closer to family.

Rev. Jo Wayne McClain, born in Selmer, Tenn., has held nine appointments and has served as New Orleans District Superintendent. McClain and his wife Mary Ann will live in Slidell in retirement.

Retiring as Baton Rouge District Superintendent, **Rev. Leslie P. Norris, Jr.** has pastored several congregations, served as Conference Executive Secretary of Christian Education, and served as Chaplain of Dillard University. He and his wife Roszeta will relocate to their New Orleans home.

Rev. Lewis L. "Jake" Olmsted entered the seminary only after retiring from the U. S. Air Force and completing the requirements for a B. S. in accounting. He has served several appointments, including his current one in Gretna. Jake and his wife Sharon will retire to Mandeville.

Rev. Wes Reagan is completing 16 years of service with the Louisiana Conference, most recently with St. Luke's UMC, New Orleans. Reagan and his wife Linda look forward to retirement, but he hopes to continue in the pastoral role.

While working with youth for 15 years at Trinity UMC, Ruston, **Lloyd E. Scott** decided to enter the ministry as a full-time pastor.

Rev. Scott, with his wife Diana, retires from his current appointment, Golden Meadow-Grand Isle.

Rev. W. Odell Simmons has served the Louisiana and Missouri conferences for a total of 51 years, and is currently appointed to Aurora UMC, New Orleans. He has also served as superintendent of the Shreveport District. He is married to Dorothy Younger Simmons.

Rev. Leland D. Wade, along with his wife Cookie, look forward to retirement in Shreveport after years of service in the Louisiana and Indiana conferences. He currently serves the Mansfield-Grand Cane appointment.

Legislation, *from page 1*



Photos by Joshua Lewis

"The kindergarten teachers tell us all the time how ready the children are," said Debra Haynes, a pre-school teacher at Baines Lower Elementary School in West Feliciana Parish, one of the few public school systems in the state that make pre-school available to its residents. Some of her students can already read, she said, and most have learned the entire alphabet by the time they finish. As a result, many students begin reading at the first grade level while they're in kindergarten, said Principle Joyce Edwards. "It's giving them an extra year." Legislation proposed by Sen. Bill Jones, a United Methodist, would make funds available for other parishes around the state to start pre-school programs of their own.

focus on the educational component of the program. Additional hours before and after the normal school day would offer parents needing day care increased opportunities to take advantage of this early-childhood education program.

"Some parents will need to take advantage of the extra hours, some will not. But we know that it is not good for children at this age to be moved around during the day. The single venue helps promote better learning and proper development," said Sen. Jones.

The program is completely voluntary, as each parent has a choice whether or not to participate. The early-learning project is also optional in that individual school districts may elect to participate or not. If a school district opts into the program, they agree to meet state content standards, teachers must be qualified, and there must be universal access provided to all four-year-olds within the district.

"Scientific research clearly demonstrates the positive benefits of early-childhood education, especially for those children characterized as 'at-risk.' Louisiana has the highest percentage of 'at risk' kids in the south, second only to New Mexico when looking at national rankings. Louisiana also leads in other categories such as the number of children born to single parent families, low

earnings power, and the overall number of teen pregnancies," said the senator.

"As a teacher in Louisiana looks out over a classroom of new kindergartners, one in three of these children has been born in poverty. Nearly 40% were born to single mothers. Effectively one-third of the class was born into an unstructured background. About one third of the class has a vocabulary of only 1,000 words, doesn't know their colors, has difficulty standing in lines, and has probably never been a part of an organized group. The presence of this group of children brings down the expectations of the class, lowers progress levels, and inhibits learning for all," said Jones.

Whose fault is it? One thing Jones is certain of: the child is not at fault.

"When everyone gets through with pointing fingers at one another, the child is still standing there, looking to us for answers," he said. Jones added that when we help those at risk, it is not just the correct or moral thing to do; we benefit ourselves and society as a whole as we improve their skills and quality of life.

Universal access to the program is



Jones

accomplished by the state agreeing to pay the cost of "at-risk" children, or those children who qualify for free and reduced lunch. Nearly half the children in the state of Louisiana fall into this category.

Dr. Craig Ramey, with North Carolina's early childhood educational project and Dr. Billy Ray Stokes of Civitan Research Institute have played key roles in designing the proposed program. State Superintendent of Schools Cecil Picard has also been heavily involved in its development.

West Feliciana Parish has offered pre-school to its residents for more than a decade.

"I call it the 'noble experiment,'" said Superintendent of Schools Lloyd Lindsey, who helped Jones pen the legislation.

The experiment has paid off in test scores that consistently rank in the top three in the state, Lindsey said.

"It validates what Cecil Picard and Bill Jones are trying to do," he said.

The program has received the endorsement of the AFL-CIO, the Superintendents association, the State Department of Education, local teachers' organizations, BESE, CABL, children's advocacy groups, and the support of Gov. Mike Foster, who has earmarked \$15 million in federal funding along with \$750,000 from the state to get the program started.

"The bill is structured to give flexibility to each school district as they construct a program. Districts are encouraged to collaborate with established projects, such as Head Start, which spends \$94 million in Louisiana alone. We cannot have a cookie cutter approach to the problem in a state like Louisiana," said Jones.

Those working on Senate Bill 766 have looked to the North Carolina project as a successful design model for Louisiana's proposed program. Jones also points to the Reading Readiness program in Texas, started by President George W. Bush during his term as governor, as another good example of an early-education model.

"Research done over the last 20 years shows that we can permanently raise the average IQ by 8-17 points. We can decrease by half those classified as needing special education. Louisiana can raise the number of students completing a high school education, can lower teen pregnancy rates, and improve discipline in the schools.

"I encourage every United Methodist, and every citizen in the state to call their representative and ask for a 'yes' vote when Senate Bill 766 comes to the floor this week. This vitally important project can make a real difference in the lives of children in our state," said Jones.

Bishop Alfred Norris featured among highlights of Annual Conference

The following events are some of the highlights of the 2001 Louisiana Annual Conference, June 3-6 at Centenary College in Shreveport. "Alive in the Spirit, Walking in the Way" will serve as the prevailing theme during the following events:

Sunday, June 3

4:30-6:30 p.m. Board meetings

7:30 p.m. Worship: Memorial/Communion service

Monday, June 4

11 a.m. Praise 'n Preaching: "Alive in the Spirit" with Bishop Alfred L. Norris, Sr.

8 p.m. Worship: "Unity in the Spirit" with Bishop Alfred L. Norris, Sr.

Tuesday, June 5

9:30 a.m. Commissioning of probationers and recognition of local pastors

11 a.m. Recognition of retirees

1:30-2:15 p.m. Praise 'n Preaching: "Walking in the Way" with Bishop Alfred L. Norris, Sr.

7:30 p.m. Ordination service at First United Methodist Church, followed by reception for ordinands and retirees

Wednesday, June 6

12:15-1 p.m. Fixing of appointments

Bishop Hutchinson explores 'joy of the Lord' at banquet



"Instruments of the Servant," the praise band from The Church of the Servant in Mandeville, provided much of the musical entertainment at the Northshore District Laity Banquet in April.

BY REV. BRADY WHITTON
DISTRICT COMMUNICATION ADVISOR

On Sunday, April 22, more than 290 people, both lay and clergy, gathered in Mandeville at St. Timothy on the Northshore for the Northshore District Laity Banquet.

Those in attendance enjoyed good food, warm fellowship, uplifting music, and the inspiring words of keynote speaker Bishop William Hutchinson.

A portion of the proceeds from the banquet, sponsored by the Board of District Laity, is to be given in support of the Daughenbaugh-Matheny Scholarship.

Bishop William Hutchinson gave a hilarious and inspiring message based on a phrase from Nehemiah 8:10, "...do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

Exploring the importance of laughter, and allowing his listeners to experience a little for themselves, Bishop Hutchinson stressed that having the "joy of the Lord" does not mean that Christians will always be "silly, laughing, or giddy," but that Christian joy comes from "God's presence" and "God's strength," rather than from life's ever-changing circumstances.

Musical highlights of the banquet included the unique styling of the praise band from The Church of the Servant in Mandeville. Calling them-

"Christian joy comes from 'God's presence' and 'God's strength,' rather than from life's ever-changing circumstances."

selves "Instruments of the Servant," and featuring the talents of Mike Myhal, Ken Schallenberg, Keith Craik, Connie Fricken, David Elder, and the Rev. Barry Hughes, the group led the crowd in many favorites including "Just A Closer Walk With Thee," and "Cornerstone."

Another musical guest, Michael Morris, whose CD "Look Up and Live" is available through Rain Music, showcased his beautiful tenor voice while performing songs of his own composition such as "Remember the Call." During the last song of the evening, Northshore District Superintendent Grayson Watson was invited to join "Instruments of the Servant" by playing an instrument requiring great talent and finesse - a shaker in the shape of an orange.

The banquet was called to a close as it was begun, with the eloquent words of the District Lay Leader, Levi Lewis.

Hartzell Mt. Zion holds women's retreat



Hartzell Mt. Zion United Methodist Church recently held its Second Annual Women's Retreat at Gulfside Assembly in Waveland, Miss. The theme for the event was "Gimme A Break." Several workshops were given on marriage and family, as well as for single members. Highlights of the retreat included games, great food and early morning walks along the Gulf of Mexico.

"Gimme A Break" was the theme for the Hartzell Mt. Zion United Methodist Church Second Annual Women's Retreat, held at Gulfside Assembly in Waveland, Miss. on March 23-24, 2001. The retreat was coordinated by Rev. Darlene Moore-James, Velva Naylor and Denise Butler.

There was truly a sense of renewal, relationship building and rest. Several workshops were given on marriage and family by Jeanne Carson, Brenda Marrow and Janine Sylvas, and on singles by Gayle Smith, Lydia Washington and Kathleen Bacon. Also Rev. James did several meditations from her published works. Early morning walks along the Gulf of Mexico, games and great food gave this retreat some special touches. The event ended with communion and a re-dedication covenant.

This church has continued to be on solid footing over the years. Rev. James is excited to share that many new ministries and exciting things have developed under the church's God-given ministry. Kids Club, LEAP Tutoring, Couples Ministry, Prayer Warriors, Christian Rappers, Gideon's Army and the UMW Circle are a few examples of these ministries. Rev. James is overjoyed that the church has a very active children and youth ministry, and is in the process of planning to build a Family Life Center in a few years. The church has raised over \$450,000 toward that end, and is debt free. Church leaders include D. Y. Archie, lay leader; Anthony Alfred, administrative board chairperson; Eugene Lee, trustee; Ray Alfred, building fund chairperson; Ella Doyle, Spiritual Academy trainee; Milton Stokes, visionary leader; Tammy Larch, tithing and stewardship; and Lionel Washington, treasurer. The late Mary P. Avery was also instrumental in developing the current tithing/stewardship program.

Hartzell Mt. Zion UMC is a congregation doing fundamental and creative ministries. For more information, contact the church at 41040 Highway 190 East, Slidell, LA 70461, or phone (985) 643-3555.

Send your church's stories to the
North Shore District Communication
Advisor:

Rev. Brady Whitton
355 Asbury Dr.
Mandeville, LA 70471-3136
(504) 626-3307

N.O. district churches contribute to success of Covenant Home

BY FORD A. WILLOUGHBY

In 1885, five German churches in the city of New Orleans joined together to fund and create a home for indigent and infirm persons. It served a desperate need at a time when this group of people became virtual outcasts. For the past 115 years, Covenant Home has provided a better quality of life for these individuals.

The following individuals, and the churches they represented, were key in the foundation of this facility:

Rev. Ferdinand O. Koelle, Second German Presbyterian; Rev. John J. Kienle, First German Methodist Episcopal; Rev. Louis Voss, First Street German Presbyterian; Rev. Charles Schuler, Second German Methodist Episcopal; Rev. Henry Hoffman, Third German Methodist Episcopal; and Rev. Owen Riedy, Immanuel Presbyterian.

Today, Covenant Home is a multi-million dollar operation that is both multicultural and ecumenical. All of the founding churches have since changed their names, but their object and purpose has always remained the same: serving the community. Covenant Home has recently undergone a \$650,000 renovation and now provides facilities for 96 residents, all needing physical and spiritual care.

The facility includes a large dining and assembly room, a chancel area for religious services and personal prayer, special offices for doctors and nurses, an occupational therapy room, two lounges, a reception lobby, a barber and beauty shop, office for social worker and activities director, offices for the administrator and staff, and a modern kitchen and laundry facility. The staff of 50 caring employees does their very best to insure that each resident experiences their optimum quality of life.

The 24-member board of directors is composed of five ministers and 19 laypersons. Rev. Judy Shema and Ford Willoughby, board treasurer, represent

Napoleon Avenue United Methodist Church. Other United Methodists on the board are Fred Leitz, Carrollton UMC and Elizabeth Walthers, First UMC. Distinguished former United Methodist members of the board are Ernest Arnold and Norwood Hingle, Sr., both formerly from Napoleon Avenue UMC. There are several United Methodist ladies who have served and are serving on the Women's Auxiliary.

Beyond striving to attain the optimum quality of life for each resident, the staff provides for and respects their religious preferences. Each new resident and/or their family are urged to notify their respective churches that they now reside at Covenant Nursing Home. At 10 a.m. each day, a prayer or short inspirational message is broadcast over the P.A. system. Church groups throughout the city come to entertain the residents and to add to the spiritual ambiance. Rev. Paul Pic, board member representing First Trinity UCC, coordinates a city-wide group of religious leaders to provide for the spiritual needs of each resident, including communion each Wednesday and services each Sunday.

In 1984, because of the undeniable success we were enjoying, the board of directors were asked to take over the ownership and operation of the Protestant Bethany Home, a multi-million dollar operation, which was founded in 1890 by Rev. Ferdinand O'Koelle, Second German Presbyterian Church. We accepted this request and Bethany now operates as a separate entity with the same members on both boards. Bethany is a larger facility, which more than doubled our operating capabilities to serve the community.

As one of the founding churches, Napoleon Avenue UMC is a major player in the day-to-day operation of both homes and through their efforts, The United Methodist Church is truly serving the Lord.



District prepares for Igniting Ministry

The New Orleans District is getting ready for the media campaign of the United Methodist Church. In preparation for the Igniting Ministry campaign, the New Orleans District Ministry Team is poised and ready to assist area churches in strengthening their skills in welcoming and marketing. "It is important that our local churches understand that assistance is available through the DMT," said District Missioner Barbara Murray. Because of recent changes, here is an updated DMT listing. Calls may be directed to District Missioner Barbara Murray at (504) 242-7042 or the New Orleans District Office at (504) 488-5430.

Barbara Murray, District Missioner
 Germaine Tropez, District Lay Leader
 TBA, Education Ministries Coordinator
 Rev. James Haynes, Outreach Ministries Coordinator
 Rev. Eugene Finnell, Renewal Ministries Coordinator
 Dr. Keith Kreutziger, Spiritual Discipline Coordinator
 Dian Kent, Co-Communications Advisor
 Karen Wilson-Sider, Co-Communications Advisor
 Rev. Regina Hickman, Youth Ministries Coordinator
 Breland Deano, Youth Representative
 Amy Ward, District Board of Church Location Coordinator
 Staphenae Carey, District Committee on Finance Coordinator
 Diana Dunn, Conference Commission Religion/Race Coordinator
 Juanita Ivie, Conference COSROW Coordinator
 Jeanne Green, UMW President
 Wallace Smith, UMM President

Mulholland youth raise \$350 for UNICEF

Munholland United Methodist Youth held a Fall Festival to benefit UNICEF. The youth presented different activity booths for children ages 2-10 to play games, create crafts and enjoy snacks. The kids were encouraged to dress in funny costumes and all the Munholland youth dressed up too. After bobbing for

apples, playing musical chairs, fishing, tossing bean bags and other activities, pictures were taken and sent home with UNICEF boxes. A total of \$350 was raised for UNICEF! Special thanks to the Munholland youth and everyone involved in helping the Munholland youth make a difference.

Trinity UMC, Buras, youth 'acquire the fire'

The youth of Trinity United Methodist Church in Buras have "Acquired the Fire". On February 2-3, the youth group attended the Acquire the Fire Conference in Baton Rouge. Twenty-four kids and nine adults attended. Many of the youth were touched spiritually; some committed their life to Christ and others recommitted their lives to the Christian faith. Since returning, the youth decided to have a Bible Study on Thursday nights at the home of one of the youths.

What a great time was had by all who attended the "Valentine Dinner and Sweetheart Show" sponsored by the Youth Group. Everyone was serenaded by big name performers like Tony Orlando and Dawn, the Christian Village People, Mona and the Supremettes, Neil Diamond, Shania and Dania, and many more. It was a night to remember for all. A special thanks went out to the wonderful youth group who served food and helped put on the event. The group found laughter in the "slightly older" folks. In the process, over \$500 was raised for the youth activities fund.

Send your church's stories to the
 New Orleans District Communication
 Advisor:

Dian Kent
 837 Sumner St.
 New Orleans, LA 70114
 (504) 528-2219

Town and Country Ministries to host dinner June 4 at Annual Conference

Town and Country Ministries, along with the Fellowship of Associate Members and Local Pastors, will host a dinner during Annual Conference, which will be held on June 4, during the evening break in the South Dining Hall of the Centenary Cafeteria.

The guest speaker for this occasion is Dr. Lynn R. Mims. Mims is known to many local pastors for his role as second year preaching instructor in the Course of Study School at Perkins School of Theology.

He currently serves as the pastor of Union Memorial United Methodist Church in St. Louis, Miss.

During the dinner, information about the courses offered by Interdenominational Theological Consortium at Dillard University will be provided for those interested in continuing their spiritual journey in the ministry.

Tickets are \$6. Advanced reservations can be made by contacting Judy Bazer at (318) 949-3612. Payment may be received at the banquet.

Director of Children's Ministries

St. Luke-Simpson United Methodist Church in Lake Charles is now seeking a Director of Children's Ministries in a part-time position. For more information, please contact Lea Rembert at (337) 474-1500.

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Laying the Foundation Plan ahead for the "summer slump"

BY DR. MICHAEL REEVES

Many church leaders are aware that church contributions do not come in equally during the year. However, church leaders often show a financial report that indicates the weekly or monthly "need." This is usually a very misleading report. Churches most often receive about 22-24% of their total annual revenue during the first quarter (January – March) and about the same amount the second quarter (April – June). The third quarter (July – September) is usually the lowest income of the year. As much as 40% of the total annual income of the church can be received in the fourth quarter (October – December). When the church financial report suggests that offerings should come in equal amounts, it communicates a false expectation that often leads to negative attitudes. The alternative is better reporting and intentional strategies.

For instance, most churches experience a slump in summer offering when school is out and families take



Reeves

vacations. Rather than lament the historically low third quarter receipts, why not take an intentional strategy to communicate more effectively? The pastor or finance committee chair could send a letter in May

accurately comparing receipts through April to the same period of time in the last two years. Then the letter could forecast the summer activities of Vacation Bible School, youth camps and trips, and other planned events. The last paragraph could suggest that "whether your vacation this summer takes you to family, friends, or France, remember to make your offering before you leave so you don't spend it while you're gone." Enclose an offering envelope in the letter.

Plan now to address the "summer slump" before it happens and prepare to celebrate the results.

Youth Director – Full-time

Experience and music skills preferred. Good communication, leadership, team-building skills and strong spiritual background a must. Send resume with salary requirement and references by June 14 to:

University United Methodist Church
Attn.: SPR, 3501 Patrick Street, Lake Charles, LA, 70605-1717
E-mail: uumclc@lightwire.net
Fax: (337) 478-8106

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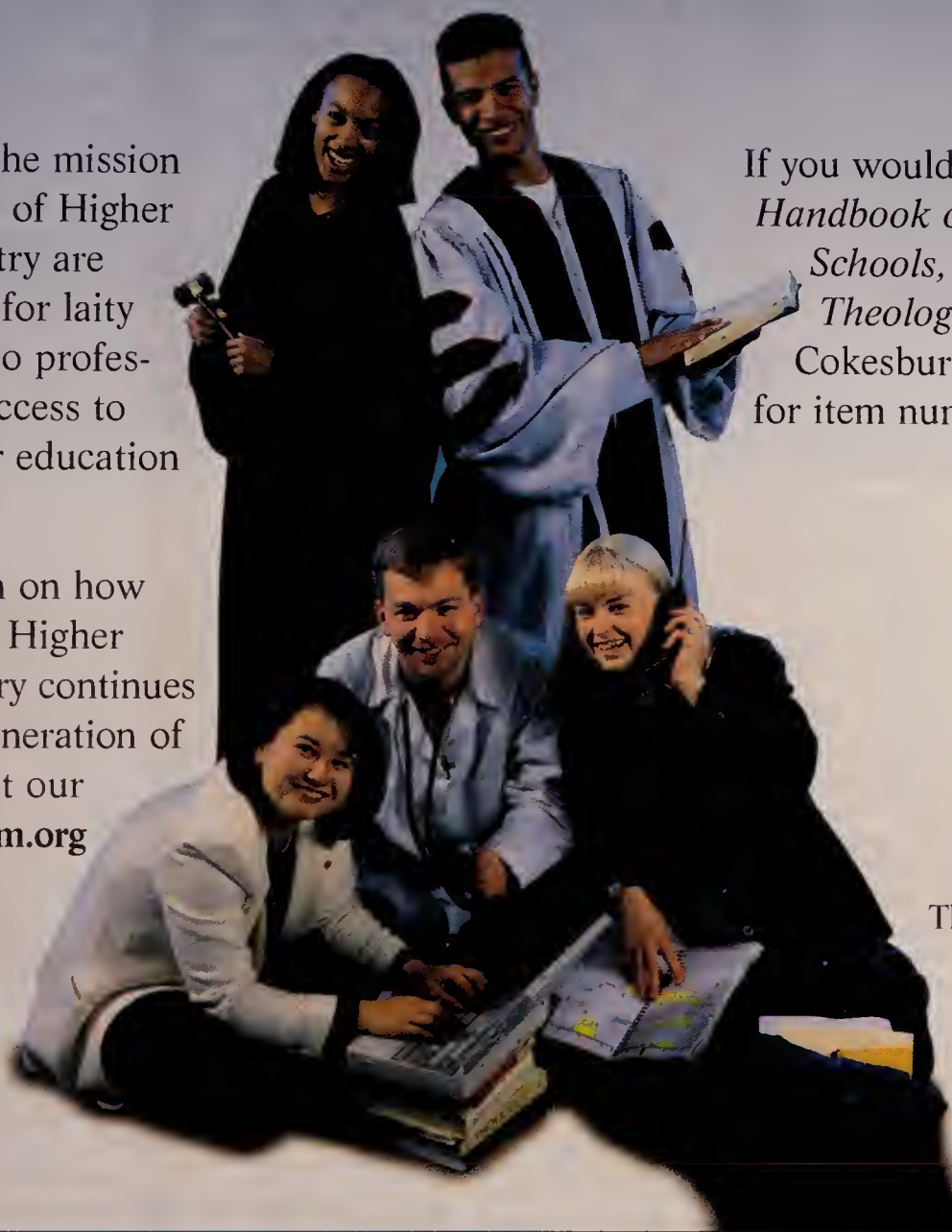
At the very heart of the mission of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry are training and support for laity and for those called to professional ministry and access to church-related higher education to all who desire it.

For more information on how the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry continues to prepare the next generation of Christian leaders, visit our Web site at www.gbhem.org or contact us at 615-340-7400.

If you would like a copy of the *Handbook of United Methodist-related Schools, Colleges, Universities, and Theological Schools* (\$7.00), call Cokesbury at 800-672-1789 and ask for item number 740534.



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Annual Conference 2001

Sermons by Bishops Hutchinson, Norris highlight gathering

The United Methodists statewide welcomed for the first time Bishop William W. Hutchinson, bishop of the Louisiana Conference, to the Annual Conference held June 3-6 at Centenary College in Shreveport.

"Annual Conference was a culminating highlight of our first year in

Louisiana," Bishop Hutchinson said.

"All that we experienced throughout the year was special preparation for this exciting gathering of the saints from across our beautiful state and from each of our faithful churches. Now we launch a new year together and I can hardly wait to bask with you in its

blessings!"

Bishop Hutchinson delivered the Episcopal Address shortly after roll call on Monday morning.

Playing off the title of a recent television program, "Temptation is More

See Bishops, page 3



Photo by Joshua Lewis

The Labyrinth offered a unique opportunity for meditation and prayer at Annual Conference. Attendees enjoy a quiet early morning walk June 4.

Presentations focus
on worldwide mission

BY BETTY BACKSTROM
EDITOR

During Annual Conference 2001 held June 3-6 at Centenary College in Shreveport, the Louisiana Conference was "alive in the Spirit" and "walking in the way" as we celebrated global partnerships in Africa, Latin America and Russia.

Our "walk" around the world began with a Monday morning presentation of an eight-minute video on Africa University in Zimbabwe. Yollande Mavund, a graduate of the university, spoke to the nearly 1,000 conference members in attendance about the school.

Nancy Carruth, chair of the Conference Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry, also participated.

Plans were announced for two Volunteers in Mission teams to visit Zimbabwe in 2002.

Nanci Youngblood, who served as part of a 32-member study team traveling through Guatemala and Mexico, shared what she learned about Encounter with Christ in Latin America and the Caribbean. The conference voted to endorse the 1996 General Conference action establishing the permanent fund for the initiative, which will be used for long-term mission and ministry of Methodist churches in those areas.

James Gillespie, chair of the conference Russia Initiative Task Force, presented a report on the status of the initiative. The presentation was highlight-

See Annual Conference, page 8

Missioner stresses importance of being ready for Igniting Ministry

BY BARBARA L. MURRAY
NEW ORLEANS DISTRICT
MISSIONER

There have been times I have participated in a group activity that asked all to share something about themselves that most people don't know. Well, in my case, those who don't know me are not aware that whenever



Murray

possible, I declare Saturday as my "gown and cartoon day." Yes, your district missioner still enjoys watching cartoons. One of my favorites of the past is "Bugs Bunny." Bugs' famous line is, "Whatsup, Doc.?"

When I ponder about what The United Methodist Church is embarking upon in September, I think we will have to answer, "What's up church?" or possibly in the words of the late great musician Marvin Gay, "What's Goin' On?"

I am humbled to inform you that I have visited fifty-two of our fifty-six churches in the New Orleans district. During our District Ministry Team sessions, members of those churches expressed dreams of increasing in membership, increasing in church school attendance, finding ways of getting inactive members back and the list of dreams goes on-and-on. However, the

See Igniting Ministry, page 7

ON THE JOURNEY

Our Dross to Consume, Our Gold to Refine

My heart was saddened when I saw the newspaper headline, "Devil's Path Brutal Area: 14 Immigrants die in Arizona." Having been born and reared in the desert Southwest, I know the austerity and heat of the desert floor. The desert can be a place of welcome serenity and is frequently laced with the fragile beauty of the delicate flowers of cacti and hardy desert plants. However, it also can be a deadly and hellish inferno (115 degrees in this instance) as experienced by these several Mexican nationals who were trying to make their way to the "Promised Land" – the interior of the USA. Some fourteen died in their attempt at a new and sustainable life.

I was the District Superintendent of the Odessa District of the New Mexico Annual Conference when another such tragedy occurred. It was 1987 and seventeen (17) Mexican men were found suffocated in a locked boxcar in Sierra Blanca, Texas, a small community on the far western edge of my district. That horrific scene also was blamed on the heat of the region.

But the desert heat is not the final dealer of death in either case. People who know how can survive a trek across the arid terrain. The dealers of death are those persons who smuggle these trusting and desperate people across the border with a promise they will find safety and new beginnings just down the road. The hopeful are loaded into boxcars, or semi-trailers that have little or no ventilation, or are set loose in the likes of the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge of southwestern Arizona with perfect knowledge these fragile human beings will not have the ability or stamina to live through the ordeal they are going to face.

It angers me to think of "man's inhumanity to man." How dare we treat so casually the life of another person? Just who do we think we are? I can't help but believe that such perpetrators will have to pay for their sins someday.

But which is worse: to rob a person of their life, or to rob their life of its meaning? That question brings the fiery trial closer to my back yard. What have been my actions, or my words, or my insensitivities that have caused another person to lose hope in life? What are steps I could have taken, or still can take that will help another of God's children to know she/he is valued and that they are most precious? How have I as a minister of the gospel offended someone so that they reject the very God I serve because of my actions? And when they reject the God I serve, have I not just contributed to their eternal death? The implications get complex don't they!

Immigrants from all sorts of desper-



Bishop William W. Hutchinson

ate situations are trying to find hope and new life. We have a pathway they can walk that will lead them home. But we have to offer it and guide them down it or they will find themselves alone in the desert wilderness with no water and

"We have the very essence of life to share with the world. Let us not be guilty of holding it to our breast as if we might run out of enough for ourselves."

little knowledge as to how to negotiate the terrain. Isn't that our calling as disciples of Jesus Christ? And if we fail to offer The Living Water to the thirsty won't we some day have to face the consequences of our sin of omission?

Oh, we have so much to give! We have the very essence of life to share with the world. Let us not be guilty of holding it to our breast as if we might run out of enough for ourselves, or as if it doesn't matter whether we share with others or not. It does matter!

The words of the hymn writer come to me in these thoughts. I believe they contain an eternal truth for us and for others who are trying to find their way through this life.

"When through fiery trials thy pathways shall lie,
my grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply;
the flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine."

– How Firm a Foundation

My prayer is that our dross is so consumed and our gold so refined that we will not leave tragedies behind us or cause them to happen before us. While God's grace is our supply, God's calling to share the love of Christ with a hungry and thirsting world is our command. We can't just leave them out there to starve or die of dehydration!

Bill Hutchinson

Peace With Justice essay winners address capital punishment issue

BY REV. PHIL WOODLAND

Heather Bethley of Vivian has been named first place winner in the 2001 "Peace With Justice" essay contest, sponsored by the La. Conference Board of Church and Society, United Methodist Church. Other winners include Jared Williams of Monroe, second place and Sarah E. Arnold of New Orleans, third place. The subject of this year's "Peace With Justice" essay is "Capital Punishment."

In her prize winning essay, Bethley quotes the United Methodist Book of Discipline: "In the love of Christ, who came to save those who are lost and vulnerable, we urge the creation of genuinely new systems for the care and support of the victims of crime and for rehabilitation that will restore, preserve, and nurture the humanity of the imprisoned." In simpler terms, we do not feel the need to kill someone because that person killed someone else. The solution is not to kill the criminals but to minister to them so that they are no longer a threat to society."

Williams cites the crucifixion story from Luke's gospel: "Many people say that some people in prison are beyond help; they are hopeless. I disagree. Jesus was crucified right beside common criminals, one on his right and one on his left. And one of the criminals cried out to Jesus and asked Jesus to remember him in heaven. And Jesus responded, 'Today you will be with me in paradise.' This man was condemned. The government of the day decided that he was beyond help and put him on a cross next to Jesus. The man was then saved by Jesus. The world had given up on him, but Jesus still forgave him and gave him the same promise we get today."

Arnold concludes in her essay, "Justice with peace seems to be a far-off

"Justice with peace seems to be a far-off goal in America. Jesus died for us, and God forgives our sin. Isn't that enough to keep us from killing others?"

– Sarah Arnold



Bethley



Williams



Arnold

goal in America. Capital punishment need not be the means to an end. Jesus died for us, and God forgives our sin. Isn't that enough to keep us from killing others? Who are we, mere humans, to get involved in God's infinite plan of life and death? What right have we to extinguish the life of another man or woman?"

All three essay winners were recognized June 4 during the presentation of awards at the Louisiana Annual Conference, held at Centenary College. Prizes awarded to the winners are \$500 for first place, \$250 for second place and \$150 for third.

Rev. Abraham Davis is chair of the La. Conference Board of Church and Society.

STAINED GLASS





Photo by Joshua Lewis

Bishop William W. Hutchinson presided over the 2001 Annual Conference June 3-6 at Centenary College in Shreveport. Alfred L. Norris, bishop of the Houston Area Texas Annual Conference, served as keynote speaker at the gathering.

Bishops, from page 1

"Than an Island" served as the theme for Hutchinson's sermon delivered during the ordination service on Tuesday evening at First United Methodist Church.

At the sending forth on Wednesday, Hutchinson gave a thought provoking message entitled "That Crazy Jesus." The bishop presided over the fixing of appointments, which will be listed in the June 22 issue of *Louisiana Now!*

Spiritual leadership was also provided by Alfred L. Norris, currently serving as the resident bishop of the Houston Area Texas Annual Conference, who served as keynote speaker for the 31st session of the Louisiana Annual Conference. The theme for this year's gathering, "Alive in the Spirit, Walking in the Way," was central to Norris' lively and inspirational offerings.

The bishop spoke at worship on Monday evening of Conference, focusing on "Unity in the Spirit." Daytime "praise and preaching" segments on Monday and Tuesday centered around the Louisiana Conference having a global vision and an attitude of genuine love.

Three win Good Samaritan Award

BY BETTY BACKSTROM
EDITOR

Three Louisiana Conference youth have received the Good Samaritan Award, the official youth award of the General Board of the United Methodist Men.

They are: Breanna Betts, a member of St. Francisville United Methodist Church; Jason Cohen of Asbury UMC, Lafayette; and Christina M. Sherman, a member of Memorial UMC in Simsboro.

Betts recently graduated from West Feliciana High School, and plans to attend Centenary College in the fall. She is a member of her church youth group, DCYM and CCYM.

Cohen attends Comeaux High School and is a member of his church youth group, serving on the Servant Leader Council. He is one of the founders and leaders of his church's youth praise band, "Pure Life."

Sherman, currently in the eighth grade, is entering the level of Senior Girl Scout and helped host an awareness fair which presented tornado safety to children.



Jason Cohen and Breanna Betts grin big after receiving the Good Samaritan Award.

The purpose of the honor is to provide United Methodist churches a means to recognize an individual youth who demonstrates the attributes of the Good Samaritan described in Luke 10:25-37.

This award recognizes ministry to others through outreach, humanitarian assistance or advocacy.

For more information, contact the Office of Civic Youth-Serving Agencies/Scouting, P. O. Box 340006, Nashville, TN 37203-0006 at (615) 340-7129.

Confirmation Day



Confirmation Day at the Louisiana Conference Center in Woodworth saw more than 750 confirmands from around the state gather to meet Bishop William W. Hutchinson May 19. The theme for the event was "Cross.com." The bishop said if an 'e' is added to the end of '.com', the word becomes Jesus' message, "Come." "So you're your own cross," the Bishop said. He asked participants to stand with arms outstretched (below) to emphasize his message. "So they could say, 'Not only is it Jesus' cross, it's my cross, too,'" said Director of Ministry Resourcing Elaine Smith, who served as chair of the event. Above, Rev. Andy Goff, pastor at Wesley United Methodist Church in Baton Rouge, bears the cross in the role of Jesus. More Confirmation Day pictures can be found on page eight.



Mt. Mariah becomes district's first Global Mission Partner

Mt. Mariah United Methodist Church is the first congregation in the Ruston District to become a Global Mission Partner through the Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church. To receive this recognition a church must:

1. Pay 100% of apportionments.
2. Have a covenant relationship with a missionary of the GBGM in which the congregation provides salary support of at least \$3 per member per year. Mt. Mariah is in covenant with both David and Lidia Jensen, serving in Bolivia. Provide mutual prayer and correspondence between the congregation and the missionary. Covenant congregations receive visits from the missionaries when they are home on furlough. Dr. & Mrs. Jensen spoke at Mt. Mariah recently and shared stories, music, and a display of local

handicraft items.

3. Sponsor a Person in Mission through the GBGM of salary support of \$2 per member per year. Mt. Mariah sponsors an educational ministries director in Russia.

4. Have a mission study for the congregation, beyond the one held by the UMW.

5. Serve your local community through outreach. Mt. Mariah ministers in nursing homes and provides gifts for the Methodist Children's Home.

6. Share your experience with two neighboring congregations. Mt. Mariah wants to tell of their experience to other churches.

To learn more how your church can become a Global Mission Partner (and receive a banner recognizing this achievement), contact the Louisiana Conference Mission Secretary, Rev. Doug Milliron, P.O. Box 680, Bunkie, LA 71322.

Lidia Jensen and Dr. David Jensen, missionaries to Bolivia (at center) spoke at Mt. Mariah United Methodist Church about their work in the country. At left is Nancy Bond, Mt. Mariah's Mission chair and at right is Ralph Johnson, Church Council chair. Members heard about the medical clinics and hospitals Dr. Jensen supervises. Last year the Jensens were able to distribute a boxcar load of health kits from the United Methodist Committee on Relief depot at Sager-Brown in Baldwin. The couple testified to the great way these health kits are being used.



Childrens' minister sets out to make Sunday School more appealing

BY ANN THOMPSON

I arrived on the scene in May 1999 with very few expectations about my new career as Minister to Families with Children at Trinity United Methodist Church. You see, I was leaving a job at a funeral home (yes, you heard me, a funeral home) where I served as Children's Loss and Grief Specialist. And while I had served in ministry in my church for years, I wasn't exactly sure about the daily ins-and-outs of a thriving children's ministry. Boy, was I in for a treat...

My first crisis occurred just a few weeks into my new job when I was told it was past the time to begin preparing for Vacation Bible School. I soon discovered that it was easier to find a kidney donor than it was to recruit teachers. The planning and recruiting went on at a feverish pace up until the last minute. Reality Check #1: People don't line up at the door to volunteer to teach children.

A few months later, my four-year-old son, Henry, woke up one Sunday morning with a fever and my law-enforcing husband was at work. I announced to my 8 year-old daughter, Mary Arthur, that we would not be going to church that day. She proceeded to dance around the living room and do cartwheels. Reality Check #2: I am the Minister to Families with Children at my church, and my own children don't even like going to Sunday School.

After my badly bruised ego recovered, I began talking to some of the mothers in my church and realized that they and their children felt the same way. After my poor little ego recovered once again, I decided to ask God what to do about it, and this is what happened... Those same mothers and I formed the BHAG (Big, Hairy, Audacious, Goal) Group whose sole purpose was to develop a mission, vision and goals for the children's ministry at Trinity UMC. With God as our

driver, we steered our way through web pages, conferences, telephone calls and many lunches, finally developing a focus for our children's ministry. About this same time, a light bulb went off in my little head and God reminded me of something one of our dads had given me right after I started working at Trinity. It was about something called Workshop Rotation Model Sunday School. At the time, I had politely thanked the dad and placed it in my pile of things to look at in my spare time (the way things looked, that spare time would not arrive until the year 2003). Now God was telling me that I would actually need to MAKE TIME to look at it. Gee thanks, God. So I pulled out the information and looked at it. I got excited. Then I shared it with BHAG. Then we got even more excited. We were amazed at this "God Thing" and how unbelievably well it fit in with our mission, vision and goals for the children's ministry! This is what we found out: "Workshop Rotation Model is helping churches to make use of the concepts of Multiple Intelligences Theory, brain studies, gift-based ministry and other current educational research by suggesting that we change our educational 'paradigm' almost completely. Instead of having one volunteer teacher trying (and generally failing) to do it all in one classroom, we are suggesting that churches:

1. Turn rooms into multi-dimensional learning environments. For example, a drama room, art room, computer room, storytelling room, movie room, and cooking room. Have adult volunteers work in rooms where their particular passion and gift focus one entire lesson hour on one main learning medium. 'Rotate' a different set of children each week to a particular learning environment, hence the concept 'Rotational' or 'Multi-Dimensional' learning environments.



Repeat Biblical stories over a series of four to six weeks so that the children experience the same story through different modalities over a short course of time. Give permission to artisans and other creative people from within each congregation to create murals, interior design themes, and authentic looking Biblical environments for each room, hallway, etc. This is what we can refer to as 'enhanced environments' which in turn encourages better retention of the Biblical content. People with the gift of Nurturing become "shepherds" for specific age groups and provide the stability and continuity as they are with the same children each week.

"This model will result in:

- Children more fully engaged in each learning environment.
- Children wanting to come back because they have other rooms to look forward to in the weeks to come.

- Adults teaching in their area of giftedness and children who can feel their enthusiasm.

- Children learning the 'Story' thought multiple pathways - not just from reading, listening and coloring around tables" (Multi-Dimensional Learning, Mickie O'Donnell, Executive Director of Children's Ministries of America.)

Send your church's stories to the Ruston District Communication Advisor:

Rev. Joe Hamilton
P.O. Box 1658
Hodge, LA 71247
(318) 259-2647

E-mail: dchjeh@bayou.com



Love Chapel goes up in 'Holy Smoke'

Four covenant groups (a total of 40 people) at Love Chapel United Methodist Church used the book, "Holy Smoke: Whatever Happened to Tithing?" by J. Cliff Christopher and Herb Mather (Discipleship Resources, 1999) for a 30-day Bible study with four weekly group meetings during the season of Lent.

The study helped shift the focus from giving to meet needs, to a deeper, more spiritual connection of giving as a sign of our relationship with God, and our gratitude for the life which God has given us.

The 30-day journey was so meaningful that the groups chose to all come together in late April for a "Holy Smoke Barbecue" and a time of sharing and prayerful commitment to grow in giving.

Following the hamburger supper, folks gathered in the sanctuary for singing, speaking of the ways God had been moving in their lives through this study, prayer together, and finally, burning our written commitments to God in a chimenea before the altar.

Financial giving during April increased 25 percent compared to January giving.



Church Careers

A group of second year Church Career students attended a retreat at Caney Lake in April. It was a time of reflection and fellowship led by Rev. Jack O'Dell, director of Church Careers at Centenary College. Pictured are: O'Dell, Valerie Olson, Drew Sutton, Mimi Boyten, Lynn Bryan, Lacy Adam and Susannah Miller and Chasity Jackson.

A guest speaker, Brian Mercer was scheduled to lead the evening service one recent Sunday at Springhill United Methodist Church. Earlier that day, "Aunt Becky" (a.k.a. Kaye Cage) and "Aunt Rose Marie" (a.k.a. Pat McWilliams) entered the sanctuary late as the announcements were being read. These two outrageous "Aunties" wondered out loud where Brian Mercer was. Brother Charlie Langford informed them (and the congregation) that Mercer would be speaking at the evening service, not the morning. After the ushers politely asked the Aunts to have a seat, the service could continue. That night many church members came to the evening service, and Brian was a blessing to all.



Churches come together for Confirmation

BY PATRICIA THOMAS
ST. PAUL UMC

"It was a phone call that made the difference," says Ken Fisher, Pastor of St. Paul/Round Grove Charge, as he called other Pastors to share a vision about a joint Confirmation Class Project. Rather than each local church doing Confirmation alone, eight churches

came together, each hosting one class. Confirmants and Mentors, Van drivers and other people assisted with the class moving from church to church. Refreshments were provided by each church. The participating churches were: Rev. Willie Jackson, Faith UMC; Rev. Willie Henry, St. James UMC; Rev. Clyde Smith, Mt. Zion UMC and Johnson Chapel UMC; Rev. Kenneth Fisher, St. Paul and Round Grove UMC. Rev. George Thomas also helped to plan the event. A Holy Week Revival held at Johnson Chapel Church and the Good Friday Service at Faith UMC were outgrowths of the Confirmation venture with all of the above mentioned Pastors serving as preachers. Ken Fisher says, "It is my dream that this newly bonded fellowship among these churches will flourish." An invitation is extended to other area churches to join with us in the future.

Send your church's stories to the Shreveport District Communication Advisor:

Mary Jarvis
169 Patton Ave.
Shreveport, LA 71106
(318) 861-0586 work
(318) 865-0465 home
fax: 318-869-4319
E-mail: maryj@broadmoorumc.org



Shreveport District Superintendent Rev. William Peebles joined members of Logansport United Methodist Church in April to celebrate the groundbreaking of their new sanctuary. The former one was destroyed by the tornado of Easter 1999. The slab has been poured and the frame is already going up on the new building. Pictured with Peebles are: Bryce Alger, Fallon Foley, Emily Parker, Jeffrey Dick, Mallory Guillotte, Abbie Woods, Michael Bagley, Debra Dick, Hunter Bagley, Craig Alger, Betsy Woods, Emily Laenger and Macy Guillotte.

Churches plan mission to Hispanic congregations

For the third year, Bethel United Methodist Church and First UMC, Logansport, will conduct a joint mission to Hispanic churches in the Moody, Tex. area.

This year, they will be painting and installing new windows and doors in a parsonage in Temple, Tex. While the

construction teams work, other mission team members will conduct a two day Vacation Bible School for children in Moody.

Approximately 30 adults and youth are expected to make the trip. The youth of the two churches raised money for the trip scheduled June 28-July 1.

Magazine offers tips on college life

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (UMNS) — Students going to college for the first time can find tips for adjusting to campus life as well as other resources in the current issue of Orientation magazine.

The 48-page Orientation 2001 addresses issues facing students and their parents at the start of a new school year.

The annual magazine, in its 23rd year, is designed to assist graduating high school seniors with the transition to college. It offers practical tips about campus life, how to locate the campus ministers or chaplain and how to ask for help.

The magazine is produced jointly by the United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry's Campus Ministry Section and Office of Interpretation.

Designed for an ecumenical audience, Orientation 2001 may be used by church

groups, campus ministers, college deans and other college administrators.

This year's theme is "Soul Survivors in the Real World." Articles explore the "real world" of people caring for one another, working together in community to help others, and living out their faith every day in Christian service.

Other articles challenge students with questions about God, faith, values and relationships. Information about loans and scholarships, prayers for students, and a study guide for group or individual reflection are also included.

Copies are \$3 each and are available in bulk orders. Details on ordering Orientation 2001 are available from the Campus Ministry Section, United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry, P.O. Box 340007, Nashville, TN 37203-0007; telephone: (615) 340-7404.

ORIENTATION 2001 -- Students going to college for the first time can find tips for adjusting to campus life as well as other resources in the current issue of Orientation magazine. The 48-page Orientation 2001 addresses issues facing students and their parents at the start of a new school year. The annual magazine, in its 23rd year, is designed to assist graduating high school seniors with the transition to college. It offers practical tips about campus life, how to locate the campus ministers or chaplain and how to ask for help.



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Springfield youth named to jurisdictional council

Tricia Rigsby, a member of Springfield United Methodist Church was recently elected Jurisdictional Youth Team member at a meeting of the Conference Council on Youth Ministry in Sulphur.

Rigsby is vice president in the Methodist Youth



Rigsby

Fellowship and a member of the "Under Construction" Puppet Team at her church.

She is an honor student and a cheerleader at Holden High school, as well as an assistant dance teacher in Hammond.

Rigsby also volunteers for the unified bowling league of the Florida Parishes Special Olympics.

When asked how she juggles all of her activities, Rigsby responds that, "God and church come first. After that, everything else just falls into line."

Louisiana Conference *NOW!*

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Rena Yocom Executive Director,
Conference Mission and Ministries

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E-mail: umdf@gbgm-umc.org

General Board of Global Ministries • The United Methodist Church



Igniting Ministry, from page 1

bottom line to most dreams and visions for the future were centered on church growth and development. The Igniting Ministry Campaign of The United Methodist Church is undertaking a new kind of church growth and development project. As printed in the "Introduction" of the Igniting Ministry Hand Book:

"We are embarking on an exciting, new kind of evangelism, using modern technology and the common language of television to spread the Good News of Christ to a world in need. . . . Igniting Ministry offers your church new evangelism tools, highlighted by a series of powerful national cable network commercials designed to raise positive awareness about our church. . . . The purpose of Igniting Ministry is to proclaim the gospel as we:

increase awareness and recognition among 25-54 year-olds of The United Methodist Church's basic belief.

foster among nonmembers a positive feeling and willingness to visit a United Methodist Church.

renew a sense of commitment among United Methodists.

To best achieve our objectives, your church participation must be significant and prayerful. Igniting Ministry is an undertaking of the whole church, not a quick fix. Commercials alone cannot raise awareness significantly. Only a concentration of time and effort will achieve the two objectives that are primary to the others: getting people to walk through the church door and giving them a reason to stay" (p.xii).

"Whatsup, Doc?" This is a simple question Bugs Bunny asks, but quite a profound one, too. What's up with The

"As a result of this national campaign, people will be encouraged to visit a United Methodist church in their neighborhood. Will you be prepared to greet them in Christian love through open hearts, open minds and open doors?"

— Missioner Barbara L. Murray

United Methodist Church? What's up in your church? Are you ready to greet visitors in September with open hearts, open minds and open doors? If they join, what's in place to ensure their continued attendance and active involvement in the mission and ministries of the church?

As a child growing up in Monroe, LA, I spent much of my time playing my piano; however, when I socialized with my friends and cousins, we enjoyed playing many games. One in particular is "Hide-and-Seek." If you're familiar with this game, you'll recall that the one doing the seeking would yell, "Ready or not, here I come!"

Well, my brothers and sisters in Christ, the same scenario is on the horizon: ready or not, September is coming; ready or not, the Igniting Ministry Media Campaign will begin real soon. As a result of this national campaign of The United Methodist Church, people will be encouraged to visit a local United Methodist church in their neighborhood. Will you be prepared to greet them in Christian love through open hearts, open minds and open doors? Ready or not, here they come. What preparations

are you making in your church to ensure that the invited guests will feel the love of Jesus as they enter?

During the Igniting Ministry Training on Tuesday, April 24, 2001, one of the workshop facilitators told us that the first ten minutes a visitor is in your church will determine if that individual will return. Isn't that an awesome statement?

The Igniting Ministry Campaign is designed to help the congregation develop welcoming skills. March 1998 was an experience I shall remember—I visited St. Mark's United Methodist Church in Wichita, Kansas. I believe the pastor, Tyronne Gordon, mandates all employees and members to take a course in developing skills of greeting guests. I have never visited a church that made me feel genuinely welcome from the parking lot to the pulpit.

The St. Mark's UMC family was very enthusiastic about expressing their gratitude to those of us who came to participate in an evangelism conference at their church. If I were to move to Wichita, St. Mark's UMC would definitely be the place where I would want to be actively involved in the mission and ministries of the church.

Is your congregation prepared to embrace visitors who walk through the doors of your church? All members must come aboard if the Igniting Ministry campaign is to be successful. As mentioned in the handbook, hospitality is a ministry that includes: greeters, ushers, the congregation and the pastor or core leadership team. The handbook is an outstanding resource for preparing your congregation and staff in welcoming all of God's people. As stated in the introduction of the handbook:

"The goal of the kit and of your efforts is not just to have a small cadre of people who are good at glad-handing. . . . The goal is for each member of the congregation to befriend people and appreciate their unique experiences and gifts. By working through the planning kit with your initial team, and later with your entire congregation, your church can develop a welcoming lifestyle. . . . Your welcoming, inviting and disciplining efforts, coupled with the campaign expression you choose to implement, will raise awareness of your local church in your community.

May God be with you on your journey" (p. xvi).

If you did not invest in an Igniting Ministry Planning Kit, I encourage you to purchase one (\$89.95) by contacting UMC at (877) 281-6365. Afterwards, if you need assistance in implementing the training, you may call Betty Backstrom, editor-in-chief of *Louisiana Now*, at (888) 239-5286 or your district missionary by phone or by e-mail.

Grace and Peace,
Barbara L. Murray

Emory professor advises churches not to focus only on growth

BY ELAINE JUSTICE

UMNS — A recent comprehensive survey of American congregations affirms what Rev. Thomas Frank has been telling his students at Emory University and congregations all along: Most of the country's churches are never going to be mega-churches. And, he adds, that shouldn't be their goal.

Frank, a United Methodist professor of church administration and congregational life at Emory's Candler School of Theology, says he is surprised by how dominant the "utilitarian commercial perspective" on church has become — that bigger is better, that growth is the byword, sometimes to the exclusion of everything else.

As a result, he says, "few people look to a congregation of a hundred participants with a thriving ministry in an urban neighborhood, or a church at which a few dozen immigrants gather to sustain life and hope." But maybe they should.

In his most recent book, *The Soul of the Congregation: An Invitation to Congregational Reflection*, Frank urges pastors and lay people to stop thinking of growth as the only yardstick by which to measure their faith and begin studying one of the thousands of congregations that have been around for awhile—

"Frank is surprised by how dominant the "utilitarian commercial perspective" on church has become — that bigger is better, that growth is the byword, sometimes to the exclusion of everything else."



Frank

namely, their own.

"Look what you can learn if you look at your church as a living culture," says Frank.

"There is a tremendous treasure of stories, symbols, traditions that pass from generation to generation that represent the best of what

churches have to offer. It's rare to find that in today's society, when the emphasis tends to be obtaining the latest product that can improve my life."

Frank wrote *Soul of the Congregation* partly out of frustration with what he calls the "product mentality" of church literature, most of which he says "treat churches like a widget." A frequent leader of seminars on congregational vitality, Frank likes to point out that "the theology behind this [widget] mindset is the more we produce, the closer we are

to God and to doing God's will." Clearly he doesn't agree.

"Thinking of a church as a system of productivity does not reach the depths of what church is for or why people associate with churches," Frank points out. "When participants recite a creed or sing a hymn from memory, when they kneel at the altar rail, when they give a Saturday to cook food for the homeless, something else is going on that can only be addressed with a narrative not of progress but of presence, not of productivity but of place."

He admits that the message "more is not necessarily better" is hard for many churches to hear, particularly those with an evangelical tradition such as his own United Methodist.

"Yes, we're evangelical; yes, we go where the people are. Methodists traditionally have been among the first people in the community," says Frank. "But we, along with Protestants from many

traditions, are facing the question of 'now that we're established, now what?' What is the content of our faith and how do we sustain it over a lifetime or many lifetimes?"

One way to do that, Frank says, is for congregations to draw deeply on their own traditions, to find their own soul — and nurture it. His definition of a congregation's "soul" is the place where people "meet the world through everyday practices, activities, things they make, actions they take, ways they find to express themselves and their faith out of the materials the world has to offer."

Frank cites the experiences of one of his seminary students who divided his time preaching at two small country churches that look almost identical from the outside, yet respond very differently to crises. One congregation responds "with panic. They draw inside," says Frank.

The other responds with action. "When the local plant down the road closes, they open up the building and set up a soup kitchen for the unemployed." What difference does it make, knowing the "soul" of a congregation? "It's crucial for pastors and lay leaders," Frank says. "You can't adapt to a changing world unless you know who you are."

Annual Conference, *from page 1*

ed with the singing of the Russian tune "Barcarola" by Martha Kostiuik Hollier of Ida, La., formerly with the Bolshoi Theater Opera where she was lead soprano for 21 years.

A team of Louisiana United Methodists, led by Bishop William W. Hutchinson, which is headed for Ekaterinburg, Russia in June was recognized during a "Blessing of the Global Partnerships Delegations." Highlights of the upcoming trip to Russia include the consecration of the newly completed First United Methodist Church in Ekaterinburg.

The blessing also included those attending the World Methodist Congress, to be held in Brighton, England this summer.

Earlier on Monday morning, a number of awards were presented to members of the Conference. Recipients included 25 scholarship winners; Sally-Ann Roberts, the Sarah Schoefler Award; Lusinda Warren, the Sojourner Truth Award; and Heather Bethley, Peace with Justice Essay first place winner.

The day continued with a series of reports on the status of Special Initiatives within the Conference. Rev. Chris Andrews, chair of the conference Communications Committee, presented examples of television spots which will air in September during the Igniting Ministry campaign.

Andrews stated that the Louisiana Conference has received a matching grant from United Methodist Communications totaling \$47,686, in addition to \$30,000 in funding from The United Methodist Foundation of Louisiana. These funds, along with contributions from local churches and districts, will be used to purchase a schedule of spots which will air throughout Louisiana in the fall. September has been declared "Open House" month for all United Methodist churches.

Joanne White, chair for the Bishop's Initiative on Children and Poverty, spoke

Walking
in the
Way

Alive
in the
Spirit

The logo for Annual Conference 2001 expresses this year's theme as well: "Alive in the Spirit, Walking in the Way." Nearly 1000 United Methodists from around the state gathered at Centenary College in Shreveport to welcome their new bishop, William W. Hutchinson, to his first Annual Conference.

about Rural Redemption, a workshop designed to heighten awareness of poverty in northern Louisiana and to

motivate local communities to connect services with those in need. The workshop is slated for October 20 at First

UMC, West Monroe.

Rev. Carol Cotton Winn, director of Spiritual Formation for the Conference, announced that the first class of spiritual directors has now completed its instruction.

She reported on the activities of the Academy for Spiritual Leadership, emphasizing the Conference task of "raising up spiritual leaders."

Church Extension team chair Rev. Steve Stephens announced that the Conference has a goal of 10 new United Methodist churches by 2010. Plans for "Re-Vision" of existing churches were detailed during the report, citing Mt. Nebo UMC as a recent success story with a 10 percent increase in membership.

Mornings featured sunrise prayer walks using the conference Prayer Labyrinth, a canvas pathway used for meditative and reflective walks.

Cherri Johnson, who coordinated the labyrinth effort, said, "The labyrinth is a single path, with an entrance and an exit, which always leads you to the center."

"Following the labyrinth allows you to get out of your head and focus on the spirit. It provides quiet time and the chance to release the obstacles in one's daily life."

Monday evening's focus on "Unity in Mission" demonstrated that the Louisiana Conference is alive in the Spirit and doing well in the area of missions.

Reports on Hispanic Ministry, Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century, and Shalom Zones showed the solidarity and diversity of Conference efforts. Special attention was given to the second W. T. Handy Convocation, scheduled for November of this year. Representatives of El Messias UMC focused on Hispanic ministry, which has witnessed the birth of a radio talk show as well as many outreach programs.

Confirmation Day, *from page 3*

More than 750 confirmands from around the Louisiana Conference gathered in May at the Conference Center in Woodworth. Below: members of St. Mark's United Methodist Church in Opelousas. Right: Rev. Tom Howe, pastor of University UMC in Lake Charles, does a historical turn as Methodism founder John Wesley.



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VOL. 2, NO. 11

BATON ROUGE, LA

June 22, 2001

Seven ordained as elders at Annual Conference

Three United Methodists in the Louisiana Conference were ordained as deacons, three as permanent deacons and seven as elders at an ordination service held June 5 in Shreveport at First United Methodist Church.

A highlight of Annual Conference, the service was attended by a "standing room only" crowd which enjoyed lively and inspiring musical selections from

the Dillard University Concert Choir, directed by S. Carver Davenport.

Joseph Awotwi, Davis Clark, Richard Cockburn, Terry Malone Jr., Van Stinson, Lisa Lucas Turnbull and Scott Wright were ordained elders during the service.

Ramonalynn Bethley's papers of ordination were recognized, and she was elected to membership in full connection.

Pamela Crews, Bernadine Johnson and Inez Williams were presented for ordination as permanent deacons.

Regina Hickman, Pamela Fitch Roy and Carol Sutton were ordained deacons under the 1992 Discipline.

On Tuesday morning of Annual Conference, eight candidates were com-

See Ordination, page 2



Ruston District to reprise Igniting Ministry training

Dawn Hand, regional trainer for the Igniting Ministry initiative, will lead a training event at Arcadia First United Methodist Church July 10 at 6:30 p.m. This free session is sponsored by the Ruston District, and is open to any Conference church.

"Dawn and Sammy Hargrove did such a wonderful job of introducing the Igniting Ministry initiative at the regional training in April that we wanted to bring her to Louisiana one more time to provide this learning opportunity to some conference churches who may have missed the first event," said Ruston District Superintendent Jimmie Pyles.

Interested churches are asked to RSVP for this event. For more information, contact the Ruston District office by July 5 at (318) 251-2690. Igniting Ministry Planning Kits will not be provided at the training, but may be ordered by calling toll free (877) 281-6535.

INSIDE



Annual Conference
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Allison's Aftermath



Photo by Joshua Lewis

Members of the Louisiana National Guard unload one thousand flood buckets sent from the UMCOR Sager-Brown Depot in Baldwin to aid flood recovery in the Baton Rouge area. Officials at the depot are urging new donations of flood buckets to replenish the supply.

Methodists respond in flood recovery

Louisiana United Methodists continue to respond to the needs of those throughout the state most affected by the recent flooding rains of Tropical Storm Allison. Nearly 6,000 flood buckets from the UMCOR Sager-Brown Depot in Baldwin were released for distribution to disaster areas in Louisiana and Texas as a result of an appeal by Bishop William W. Hutchinson of the Louisiana Annual Conference. The contents of the buckets will be used in cleanup efforts.

Governor Mike Foster declared 11

parishes as disaster areas after some parts of drought stricken southern Louisiana received up to 28 inches of rain during the week of June 4. Twenty of the 64 parishes statewide were declared in a state of emergency. Ten parishes have been designated to receive aid from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

In East Baton Rouge Parish alone, about 1800 residents were evacuated and about 1,000 structures were flood-

See Flood recovery, page 3

Flood buckets needed

United Methodists are asked to begin assembling more flood buckets and health kits and deliver them to the UMCOR Sager-Brown Depot. (800) 334-4221.

Churches needing delivery assistance may contact the Acadiana District Office at (337) 235-2904 for assistance. A list of the contents of flood buckets and health kits may be found on the Web at:

<http://gbgm-umc.org/units/umcor>

ON THE JOURNEY

Potpourri

This has been an interesting day, this Monday, June 11, 2001. It began with the news media flooding the airwaves with reports of the execution of Timothy McVeigh. Every television station I turned to this morning had people making observations of how they now feel given the fact that this perpetrator of one of the most heinous crimes in America's history has been put to death. Many stated they were surprised that they didn't feel better immediately. Instead, they found their heightened expectations of peace thwarted by a sense of confusion.

Some were asking if they were left with an unfulfilled feeling because the death came so calmly. Did they need to witness the criminal suffer a little more than was apparent in

the death by lethal injection? Others were disappointed there was no sign of remorse in McVeigh's demeanor nor in anything he said. Still others said their eye contact with him as he entered the death chamber found them facing a steely cold stare that had no sense of human warmth in it. It was not the "closure" for which many hoped.

On the other hand, there were those who said they were now relieved that McVeigh would not have the opportunity to kill again. They could sleep better at night because the remorseless killer would not be loosed on society at any point in the future. And others said they felt their loved one's deaths had now been avenged in some way and that others would see that such a criminal act would not go unpunished.

Personally, the event left me with a feeling of profound sadness. A sort of "emptiness" has filled my soul. What happened in Oklahoma City in 1995 was an act I do not understand, do not find any way to explain, and an act that could only have been conceived by evil. However, death to the evildoer doesn't give me any satisfaction either. Perhaps my work in prisons has heightened my belief that even the most hardened criminal can find redemption in Jesus Christ. Nothing is so grave that the wrongdoer cannot be redeemed and made whole again. If I don't believe that, then the gospel I preach is shallow and powerless in the face of the most grievous evil.

At the same time, such an act as the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah building that caused 168 deaths of innocent and helpless people, cannot go unnoticed or unpunished. One so demented should not be released into public life ever again, or so I believe. But for some reason, the death penalty does not give me any satisfaction that true justice has been done. I identify with



Bishop William W. Hutchinson

"Nothing is so grave that the wrongdoer cannot be redeemed and made whole again. If I don't believe that, then the gospel I preach is shallow and powerless...."

June 11, 2001 preparing myself to leave for Russia tomorrow. I will be part of a team of people from Louisiana who will be present in Ekaterinburg as we dedicate First United Methodist Church there on Sunday, June 17. This is the culmination of a long dream for the people of this great Russian city, and the fruit of the labors and monetary gifts of the United Methodists of Louisiana. The preparation to go be a part of this momentous occasion has been a soul-filling feeling, as opposed to the soul-draining feeling of the execution.

When I think that it wasn't long ago that we were in a cold war standoff with the people of Russia and questioned whether they were anything but cold-hearted and robot-like atheists in their march to take over the world, this trip has even more profundity to it. It is a beautiful step in our efforts to become as one, even as Jesus the Son and God the Father are one (John 17: 21). I'm glad I have lived to see this great day!

Annual Conference was a wonderful event for Kay and me. What a joy to experience your worshipping spirit and your gracious hospitality in that setting. We came home from Shreveport with another confirmation that we are privileged to be among you. We are looking forward to the years ahead and to continuing to walk with you as together we become more and more who Christ is calling us to be. May God's blessings be with us all as we journey together!

I'm off to bed now so I can rise to greet the sun tomorrow and be off to a part of God's world I never dreamed I would visit. It will be fun to share with you what I find there.

In Christ's love,

Bill Hutchinson

the ones who today said they were confused and did not have a feeling of peace or that all was well. There just isn't an easy answer to a situation with the immense ramifications of this crime.

I plan to keep searching the spirit of God, or better still to have the spirit of God search me on this one. I still have a long way to go before I sleep peacefully around the whole issue of what is truly the just thing to do in such a case as that of Timothy McVeigh.

I have spent the remainder of this



Photo by Betty Backstrom

Bishop William W. Hutchinson commissions Rev. Shawn Anglim of University United Methodist Church, Baton Rouge, as a probationary elder in the Centenary College Gold Dome at Annual Conference in Shreveport.

Ordination, from page 1

missioned as probationary members of the Division of Elders. They were: Shawn M. Anglim, Alexis Brent, Joseph M. Donakey, Jonathan King, Ellis E. Newman, E. Eugene Rives, Brady S. Whitton and Nancy E. Wofford.

Eight local pastors were recognized for completion of the Course of Study School. They included Samuel L. Bradley, Lee Eckerle, Robert M. Eckerle, Jr., Robert D. Hayes, Regina B. Hickman, Carl D. Munyon, Gaynell B. Pittman and Carol R. Richardson.

A large group was presented to be

licensed as local pastor, and appointed for the first time in The United Methodist Church.

They included: Barbara J. Beaumont, Darrel Briggs, Francis Joseph Davis, Christi Emarual, Linda M. Hagan, Thomas G. May, Mary Nann McMullen, William Brian Mercer, Charles Penuell, Constance R. Saizon, Jo Ann Sims, Truman Prescott Stage, Kevin DuWayne Townsend, Kenneth Doyle Valentine, Helen Byrnes Walker, Suzanne Wastlund and Leslie Michael Webb.

Workshops to help churches plot financial future

Eighteen "Faith and Money" workshops, cooperatively sponsored by the Cabinet, the Council on Finance and Administration and The United Methodist Foundation of Louisiana, are scheduled between July 28 and September 15.

The workshops, a Stewardship Initiative of the Foundation, will be targeting clergy and lay leaders throughout the nine districts of the Conference.

"The desired outcome of this effort is to equip clergy and lay leaders with the tools to develop financial plans for their respective churches," said Michael Reeves, Foundation president.

The series features a three-hour workshop for all clergy, where they will receive cutting-edge stewardship resources and tools for personal development.

The workshops will also offer practical options for all churches, no matter what level of stewardship they currently possess.

"No matter the size, history or financial experience of a church, there will be something for everyone," said Reeves.

Leadership for the series will be provided by members from the sponsors and conference District Superintendents.

"We are very excited to offer these valuable workshops at no absolutely no cost. Participants will receive a resource

book, which contains over 100 practical ideas for enhancing financial stewardship in the local church. We encourage all clergy to invite their lay leaders to participate in this unique event," said Reeves.

Sessions specifically designed for clergy will be held 9 a.m.-12 noon, except the Lake Charles District session, which will be held in the evening. Lay leader sessions are scheduled for 1-3:30 p.m., except for the Baton Rouge and Shreveport sessions and Lake Charles District sessions (times indicated below).

The schedule for the Faith and Money workshops is as follows:

New Orleans District, Sat. July 28, St. Luke's UMC; North Shore District, Sat. Aug. 11, St. Timothy UMC; Acadiana District, Sat. Aug. 18, Covenant UMC; Alexandria District, Sat. Aug. 25, conference center; Ruston District, Sat. Sept. 8, place TBA; and Monroe District, Sat. Sept. 15, First UMC, Rayville. Lake Charles will meet on the evening of Aug. 3 and the morning of Aug. 4, times and place TBA.

Shreveport will meet at 9 a.m. on Aug. 21 and from 2-4:30 p.m. on Aug. 26, place TBA. Baton Rouge will gather on Sept. 6 at 9 a.m. and from 6-9 p.m. on Sept. 9, place TBA.

For more information about the workshops, contact the Foundation office at (225) 346-1535.



Photo by Mickie Townsend

Volunteer teams from Indiana and Texas load mops and other cleaning supplies bound for flood-stricken parts of Houston at the UMCOR Sager-Brown Depot.

Flood recovery, from page 1

ed since the storms moved in.

In Ascension Parish, inmates and National Guardsmen built sandbag levees in an attempt to contain the rising Bayou Manchac.

The Amite and Comite rivers overflowed their banks, causing flooding as they crested at various points along their routes.

Rev. John Locascio of Patterson UMC, who serves as Acadiana District coordinator for Louisiana United Methodist Disaster Response, reported that Assumption parish was "devastated."

Many Lafourche Parish residents fought to save their homes and businesses after several levees broke.

"The flooding was unbelievable. Residences and businesses in Acadiana District have been hard hit," said Tony Fontenot, conference disaster incident coordinator.

"Working with the American Red Cross, the Louisiana National Guard and various state and local emergency agencies, The United Methodist Church is now planning its relief effort."

First United Methodist Church, Thibodaux, suffered the fallout of Tropical Storm Allison with nearly six inches of water flooding the sanctuary. "The water entered the sanctuary during the night and receded before morning. Now we are waiting to see the extent of the damage," said Rev. Wybra Price.

American Red Cross personnel have established operations across the street from First UMC, Thibodaux and will remain there in the coming weeks

as they provide disaster relief to the immediate area.

Tony Credeur, a member of Asbury UMC, Lafayette, and CEO of the Acadiana chapter of the Red Cross, has formally requested assistance from the Louisiana Conference. Volunteer case workers are needed to assist families in the Lafayette area.

Sue Pugh, conference disaster coordinator, along with Fontenot and Locascio have been working closely with Acadiana District Superintendent Rev. Terry Willis in the coordination of relief efforts. Local businesses have donated food and other items to those in need.

Fontenot, also a member of Asbury UMC, noted that teams of youth and adults may be assembled to help with future construction and repair needs in the flood-stricken areas.

"The Red Cross will be assessing the damage, once all the waters have receded. Federal agencies and insurance companies will need to see the damage before cleanup work can really start. The formation of relief teams will begin after the Red Cross and other agencies have finished their assessment," said Rev. Larry Norman, director of Louisiana UM Disaster Response.

Persons interested in assisting may contact Norman at the conference office by phoning (225) 346-1646. Monetary gifts used directly in the relief effort may be earmarked for Hurricanes 2001, advance number 982350-4 and sent to the Louisiana Conference, Attn: Julie Stinson, 527 North Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70802.

Church members learn 'holy reading'

Rev. Carole Cotton-Winn has been teaching a pilot class at Aldersgate United Methodist Church in Slidell using materials from *Companions in Christ*, a small-group experience in spiritual formation designed and produced by Upper Room Ministries.

"This 28-week journey is an amazing and lifegiving experience. Working in a small group of 10 persons, this unique study deals with spiritual formation rather than spiritual information," said Cotton-Winn.

The program is based in the "lexio divina" process of Bible reading, which focuses on short verses rather than long readings. Weekly lessons deal with Bible study, featuring a few short verses that "come off the page" for the participant. "Through this unique method of study, the words speak to us individually. Each member is allowed to rest in the Word, letting it fill our hearts," she said.

The words "lexio divina" mean "holy reading" in Latin.

"The four components of *Companions in Christ* include study, prayer, sharing and journaling. The small group serves also as a prayer group, deepening our understanding and practice of prayer. The group of 10 becomes a share group, where we share our own faith journey and how it has shaped us."

Journaling, the fourth component of the program, assigns one spiritual exercise daily to the participants. The exercise is designed to deepen thinking and meditation.

Materials needed for each two-hour session include the *Companions in Christ* textbook, a Bible and a journal.

"This revolutionary study is not centered on the teacher's ability to share information, but on the presence of the Holy Spirit in our midst. The emphasis on formation of Christian practices develops within the framework of journaling and sharing, not from large amounts of reading. It is the most wonderful material I've ever seen," said Cotton-Winn.

Study groups meet weekly, between the months of September and May. Groups are limited to 10 members, in addition to the leader.

A leader orientation for this new study will be held Aug. 3 at the conference center in Woodworth, with registration beginning at 9 a.m. and class starting at 9:30 a.m.

Churches are encouraged to send two persons so that each new group can have co-leaders. The cost for one leader is \$75, with an additional \$65 for the second participant. Cokesbury will offer 20% off all materials as a special incentive to churches.

Laying the Foundation

Financial planning available to clergy

BY TRACIE WHARTON, CPA

EARN, SAVE, GIVE - Methodists were given these principles by John Wesley himself. Of course, Americans have always been driven by money and have embraced the idea of increasing earning potential. And churches have a vested interest in the giving principle - but how have Christians been able to apply all three principles in their daily lives?

In our consumer culture, eight of 10 Americans spend more than they make and seven of those 10 use debt to fill that gap. A survey of recently ordained clergy reflects this trend, as many seminary graduates had over \$36,000 in student loans with an average starting compensation package of \$30,000. This scenario makes it difficult to start on Wesley's second point - "save all you can".

The United Methodist Foundation of Louisiana is pleased to add Clergy Financial Counseling to our venue of services. On June 2, the Foundation



Wharton

hosted a financial planning course for seminary students and new ministers. The key principles were: Live on what you earn; Minimize debt; Start with modest goals for saving; Let compounding interest work for you; Become

financially stable so that you can serve.

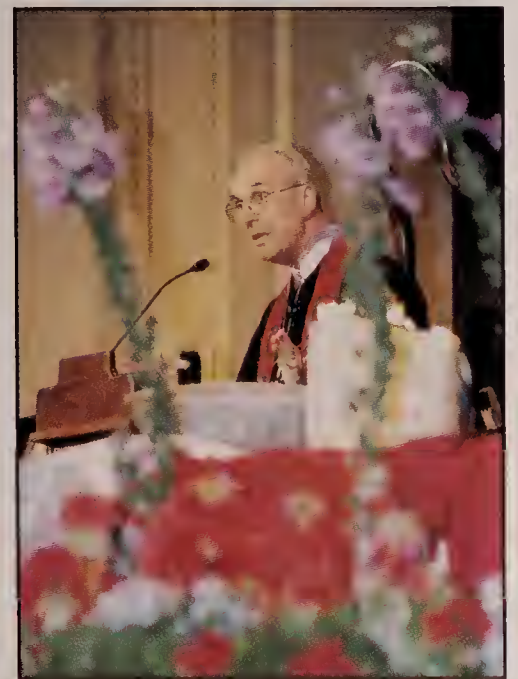
The Foundation will host another seminar at the Conference Center in the fall for those interested in addressing these issues either personally or within their congregation. The Foundation can also recommend resource materials that address finances from a biblical perspective. If you would like further information, please contact us at (225) 387-8362 or (800) 256-9317.

And remember that God called us to be faithful stewards of all that He entrusted to us.

FULL-TIME YOUTH DIRECTOR/MINISTER

Broadmoor United Methodist Church in Baton Rouge is a 4,600-member suburban church with 80+ active youth in grades 7-12. Bachelor's degree, 3 years previous experience, organizational skills, spiritual depth/maturity and UM background preferred. Send resume and references to Emily Freeman, 3934 Deerfield Lane, Baton Rouge, LA, 70816 by July 31. For additional information, call (225) 924-6269.

Snapshots of Annual Conference: *Ordination*



Photos by Joshua Lewis

Ordinands, members of the Board of Ordained Ministry and several retirees, at left, gather in the narthex stairwell of First United Methodist Church in Shreveport prior to the ordination service June 5.

Above left: Acolytes get ready for their big entrance. Above right: Bishop William W. Hutchinson delivers his sermon, "Temptation is More Than an Island."

Below: Members of the Dillard University Choir perform a rousing spiritual at the beginning of the service.



Louisiana Conference *NOW!*

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Betty Backstrom	Editor
Joshua Lewis	Contributing Writer/Photographer
Wendy Jones	Subscriptions

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Rural charge experiences spiritual growth and connectionalism

BY CONNIE AUGUSTINE

Four weeks into the 2000 Conference year, the newly appointed pastor to the Lecompte, Cheneyville and Bayou Chicot Charge, Charles Skinner, became critically ill. The length of time for his recovery was uncertain. Several retired ministers and the district superintendent led the Sunday services at the three churches for the first month.

Then one of the many blessings of the year occurred. There appeared to be a natural flow in the monthly schedule of ministers and lay leaders. The first Sunday Communion Services were led by Rev. Roland Friedrich, retired minister from Alexandria who had served for 40 years in the Conference.

The second Sunday Services were led by Kenneth Morrison, lay speaker of Lecompte UMC and a retired nurseryman, and by Richard Bushnell of Alexandria, principal for E. S. Aiken Optional School who also serves as the district missionary and district lay speaking chairman.

The three churches went from not having a minister to having three spiritual leaders. The lay leaders of each church—Dr. David Carlton, Sr., Lecompte; Mary Lee McNutt, Cheneyville, and Bennie and Ellen Helmer, Bayou Chicot—and Lecompte Administrative Council Chairman Wade Jones organized the members to assist with various parts of worship, special worship services for Christmas, Easter, and a retiring organist, visitations, and family ministries.

It then became apparent that there is a lot more to this "pastoring thing" than reading scripture, leading prayers and

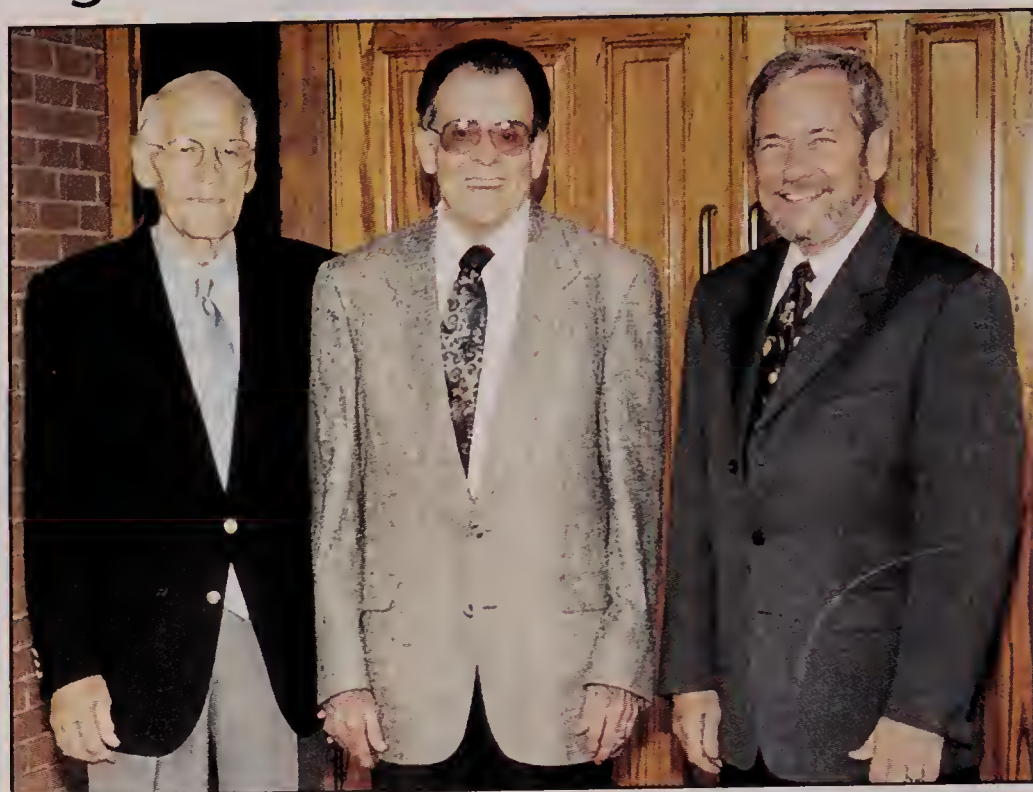
giving a sermon on Sunday morning. Questions began to surface such as "Who will check the answering machine for phone messages?" "Who will pick up the mail at the Post Office?" Who will type and print the bulletins, order the church materials, and check on members who are ill? Again, prayers were answered and all of the appropriate people stepped forward to assume these responsibilities.

By the end of the year, (December 31, 2000), the appointed pastor's health had not improved sufficiently for him to return. Another blessing, the three spiritual leaders agreed to continue their monthly schedules until Annual Conference in June.

The churches ministries continued—new members were received; weddings were performed and funeral services, which were celebrations dedicated to their lives of service, were conducted. There was a renewal of spirit and confidence in the three churches. There was a commitment of, "If it is to be, then after prayer, it is up to me." If these three churches were to be sustained, it would take prayers and works.

Throughout this year, the other blessings were those of the support and leadership of District Superintendent Rev. Bill Youngblood and his wife, Nanci. They were the "wind beneath our wings," our encouragers and prayer partners.

The next blessing came in April when it was announced that a pastor had been appointed to the charge for the new conference year—Rev. Ross Ford, Associate Pastor at Blackwater United Methodist Church in Baker, and his wife



Kenneth Morrison, Rev. Roland Friedrich and District Missioner Richard Bushnell recently helped sustain the Lecompte, Cheneyville and Bayou Chicot Charge while the churches' pastor was seriously ill.

Gladys. On Maundy Thursday, the three churches hosted a "Get-Acquainted Reception" for the Fords. Ross Ford, who has been an associate pastor for two years, answered his call to the ministry, then retired from Exxon. He told the Charge members that he felt his appointment to the Lecompte, Cheneyville and Bayou Chicot Charge was part of his journey in his praying the "Prayer of Jabez" (1 Chronicles 4: 10) that he was expanding his territory. (And that he is doing as he travels 75 miles to all

three churches on Sunday mornings.)

Rev. Ford's reference to the book. The Prayer of Jabez peaked the interest of the Lecompte adult study group. Now they are praying for "expansion of territory" and the blessings just as Jabez did.

As we reflect on the past 10 months, prayer, faith, works and many blessings have made it possible for these three rural churches to experience a spiritual growth through the "connectivity" of Methodism so that we are ready to continue the journey with the new pastor.



The Wesley-Westminster Foundation at Northwestern State University recently honored its Foundation graduates. Pictured: District Superintendent Rev. Bill Youngblood, Sametria Samuels, Sherri Pierson, Scarlett Dyson, Foundation minister Ellis E. Newman and Kathryn Richards.



Rev. James Poole of First UMC, Natchitoches, serves dinner to Ann Duke, "Relay for Life" team captain. The "walk-a-thon" raised \$62,000 for the American Cancer Society.

Nolley UMC supports First UMC, Ekaterinburg

BY ELOISE COX

Nolley Memorial United Methodist Church with several area churches have joined a Russian Partnership Ministry with First UMC, Ekaterinburg, Russia.

A recent fundraiser at the church netted more than \$1500 for the ministry.

We join with these churches to help build and furnish the sanctuary of the church while they use their other resources for programs with the public orphanages, their church medical clinic, UMCOR Soup Kitchen, Women's Prison and UMCOR Youth Shelter.

Bishop Bill Hutchinson and other Louisiana United Methodists recently visited Ekaterinburg for the consecration

of the new building June 17.

Nolley's fundraiser, "Saturday Night At The Movies", featured their Chancel Choir Director, Gail Russell; pianist, John Buckhalter; and "Friends", which included Pastor Mark B. Bengé, several former and current voice students of Gail and other high school students.

Send your church's stories to the District Communication Advisor:

Myriam Brown
3200 Messina Road
Boyce, LA 71409
(318) 445-9035



Musical Misfits

Various groups within Nolley United Methodist Church sponsor quarterly "Wonderful Wednesdays." Recently, the "Musical Misfits" were the entertainment and included: Pianist John Buckhalter; Pastor Mark B. Bengé, Sr.; Lay Leader Walter Dorroh, Jr.; and Trustee Hank Cooksey. These guys are for hire!

2001-2002 Appointments of the Louisiana Annual Conference

Bishop William W. Hutchinson affirmed the following appointments at the closing of Annual Conference 2001:

ACADIANA DISTRICT

District Superintendent	Terry C. Willis	7
Abbeville-Pecan Island	John L. Vinling	5
Baldwin, Trinity	(Barry A. Whittington PL)	2
Berwick, First	(David L. Bricker FL)	3
Dulac, Clanton Chapel	(Cyril A. Kirby Verret PL)	13
Franklin:		
Asbury	(Darrel W. Briggs PL)	1
First-McGowan	Burton F. Blair	4
Houma:		
Bayou Blue	Curtiss D. Eden	4
First	Timothy E. Lawson	4
Wesley-Mt. Vernon	(Madeline M. Mitchell PL)	5
Indian Bayou-Rayne, Centenary	(Ross W. Genger FL)	3
Jeanerette:		
St. Paul-Fitzgerald-Mt. Zion	(Fulton A. Raymond RA)	15
St. Peter-Mallalieu	Erica R. Jenkins PM	3
Lafayette:		
Asbury	T. Edward Boyd	4
Associate	Gregory G. Mann PE	3
Associate	(Ann C. Sutton)	3
Associate	Ira M. Robinson RM	7
Associate/U.L.L. Campus Ministry	(Ashley L. Mann FL)	2
Church of the Covenant	W. Ralph Ford	5
First	W. Spiller Milton	3
Immanuel	Rodney D. Wooten	4
Northwood	Darryl A. Tate	4
Lydia	(Robert W. Cormier PL)	11
Mathews, Memorial	(Peggy B. Foreman FL)	1
Melville-Palmetto	Kenneth B. Chapman RM	4
Morgan City:		
Pharr Chapel	(Newton M. Horne, Jr.)	1
Walmsley-Mason	(Dan Washington, Jr. RL)	13
Napoleonville, Wesley-Woodlawn	(Albert Holland FL)	23
New Iberia:		
First	Scott T. Bullock	1
St. James-Briggs-Mt. Zion	(Emmett C. Collins, Jr. FL)	3
Opelousas:		
Louisiana Memorial	K. Dale Hensarling	2
St. Mark	Russell L. Jones	1
Patterson	(L. John Locascio FL)	5
Port Barre-Krotz Springs-Lottie-Wilson Mem.	(Terry A. Lindsey PL)	3
Rosedale-New Roads, First	(R. Donald Gentry RL)	13
Scott Chapel-St. Paul	(Diane L. Bentley PL)	2
Thibodaux:		
Calvary	(Clifton C. Conrad, Sr. PL)	10
First-Vacherie	Richard Michael Boyett	1
Magnolia	(Joseph Holland, Sr. PL)	10
Waxia, St. Paul-Melville, St. James	(Marguerite D. Jenkins PL)	4
Wiley-Green Chapel	(Carolyn G. Ross PL)	3
ALEXANDRIA DISTRICT		
District Superintendent	William L. Youngblood	3
Alexandria:		
First	Roy T. James	4
Associate	(Lysbeth B. Cockrell FL)	3
Horseshoe Drive	R. Don Ross	4
Newman	(Ernest E. Scott)	6
St. Mark's	T.B.S.	
Trinity	C. Frances Hooton	2
Wilton	T.B.S.	
Atlanta	(Helene B. Walker PL)	1
Bethel	(George A. McVay RA)	6
Boyce:		
First-MacArthur Drive	(William K. McDonald PL)	4
Lahey Chapel-Sieper	(Glinda M. Doucet PL)	9
Union	(Dianne Allen Jones PL)	2
Bunkie:		
David Haas Memorial-Trinity-White's Chapel	Doug Milliron	2
Campiti:		
First-St. Maurice	T.B.S.	
St. Paul-Mt. Zion	T.B.S.	
Cheneyville, St. Paul	(Obie J. Southall RL)	6
Colfax	(James W. Reid FL)	5
Couley	(Thomas G. May PL)	1
Eden	T.B.S.	
Glenmora-Hineston, Fellowship	Richard C. Hooton	2
Jena, Nolley Memorial-Belach	Mark B. Bengie, Sr.	2
Jonesville-Effie, Oak Grove	(David Carlton FL)	3
Lecompte-Bayou Chicot-Cheneyville	(Ross C. Ford, Jr. FL)	1

Marksville-Evergreen-Slimesport	(Emily R. Winbery FL)	3
Melder, St. Mark's	T.B.S.	
Montgomery-Mt. Zion	(James R. Walker PL)	3
Natchitoches:		
Asbury-Emmanuel	James A. Graham	14
College Avenue-Provençal-Weaver		
First	James M. Poole RM	1
Associate	Douglas L. Cain	10
Associate/Northwestern Campus Min.	James M. Poole RM	7
First	Ellis Newman PE	2
Oak Grove-Beulah	John R. Foster OF	1
Olla-Urania	(Gloria L. Youngblood FL)	2
Palestine-Ball	J. Edwin Dilworth	3
Pineville:		
First	J. Roddy Taylor	7
Associate	Henry C. Blount, Jr. RM	2
Pleasant Grove	(George A. McVay RA)	3
Wesley-Booneville, Wesley	(James E. Ray, Sr. FL)	8
Pollock-Liberty Chapel	(Bryant E. Gore RL)	2
Sanders Chapel-Strange	(M. Susanne Westlund PL)	1
Trout, Justiss Memorial	John R. Johns RM	2
Winnfield	Barry Hoekstra	5

BATON ROUGE DISTRICT

District Superintendent	C. Gerald Richardson	1
Baker:		
Blackwater	Mark R. Martin	3
Associate	(Linda M. Hagan PL)	1
First	Thomas E. Dolph	3
Baton Rouge:		
Broadmoor	Robert L. Burgess	4
Associate	Kenneth M. Carroll	11
Associate	S. Brian Yeich	3
Associate	Donald J. Hall RM	9
Camphor Memorial	Roger D. Lathan	10
First	Christopher H. Andrews	13
Associate	Van A. Stinson	3
Associate	Jan C. Holloway PE	3
Francis Asbury	(Bill Strawbridge FL)	2
Hughes Memorial	William J. Miller	32
Ingleside	Joseph M. Donakey PM	3
Jefferson	Carol S. Winn	8
Jordan-Maringouin, St. Peter	Clarence L. Hillard	14
Neely	Arnold V. Brown	10
St. Andrew's	H. Steve Stephens	7
St. John's	Donald R. Avery	3
Associate	(Elizabeth Wyatt FL)	6
St. Luke's	(J. Philip Woodland RM)	1
St. Mark	Joseph D. Awotwi	2
St. Paul-Deerford	Frank B. Akin	2
University, William B. Reilly Memorial	Kenneth W. Irby	7
Associate	Ernest Eugene Rives PE	1
Associate/LSU Campus Ministry	Shawn M. Anglim PE	2
Wesley	E. Andrew Goff	3
Clinton:		
First-Clear Creek	J. Penn Morgan	3
Mt. Zion-St. Paul	(Henry Louis Jones PL)	9
St. Peter-Jackson Chapel	Laurence E. Hall RM	11
Convent, St. James	(Gaynell Pittman PL)	5
Donaldsonville:		
Donaldsonville, First-Lutcher	(Barbara J. Beaumont PL)	1
St. Peter-Belle Rose, St. James	(James N. Kirk FL)	2
Galvez, Carpenter's Chapel	William Paul Minyard OF	1
Gonzales, First	Gary Don Willis	2
Greenwell Springs, Magnolia	Karen F. Davis	1
Jackson-Ethel	David J. Sheehan	2
Lutcher Chapel-Gonzales, St. Landry	(Gregory McClay, Sr. PL)	11
Maringouin, Shiloh-LeJeune	(Curtis Johnson PL)	4
Plaquemine:		
First	Stephen C. Fleming	1
Grand River	(Eddie Carroll Johnson PL)	3
Hurst-St. Luke	(Thomas A. Wesley PL)	18
Port Allen, Scott-Rosedale, Hartzell	(Ulyse Stephens)	8
Prairieville, Meadows Chapel	T.B.S.	
Pride, Bethel	(William H. McLain FL)	3
St. Amant:		
Faithful	Jeffrey C. Duke	2
New River	(Roger E. Mosher PL)	4
St. Francisville	(Harold B. Babin FL)	30
Slaughter-Bluff Creek	(L. Darwin Brecheen PL)	13
Spillman, New Hope-Concord	T.B.S.	
Tunica	(Michael G. Miller SP)	4
Watson, Andrew Chapel	George W.C. Calvin, Sr.	7
Wilson, Wesley-Asbury	(Demetric L. Slaughter PL)	3
Zachary:		

First	Alan D. Einsel	2
Moses Chapel-Beech Grove-Mt. Carmel	(Willie Laws PL)	3

LAKE CHARLES DISTRICT

District Superintendent	M. Douglas Ezell	2
Cameron, Wakefield-Grand Chenier		
First	Gary L. Van Horn	2
Church Point-Iota	(Fred M. Fraser)	10
Crowley:		
First	Robert E. Hollis	3
DeQuincy	Carolyn B. Valentine	4
DeRidder:		
First	Jon E. Tellifero	5
Wesley	James C. Skinner RM	2
Ebenezer-Branch	Charles L. Floyd, Jr.	1
Eunice, First-Pine Prairie	(Frank Davis FL)	1
Fairview	(Christi Emanuel PL)	1
Florien, Prospect-Hornbeck	(William R. Boyd PL)	5
Gueydan-Kaplan	James R. Schaub	10
Hopewell-Pine Grove	(Mark S. Theriot PL)	6
Iowa	David R. DeWitt	9
Jennings	J. Richard Scott-Welch	4
Kinder-Elizabeth	Lisa L. Turnbull	3
Lake Arthur-Jennings, Associate	(Susan C. Pugh FL)	3
Lake Charles:		
First	Douglas B. deGraffenried	3
Pastor Emeritus	Carl F. Lueg RM	22
Oak Park	Roger H. Templeton	1
St. Luke-Simpson	James H. Humphreys	9
University	Michael D. McLaurin	1
Warren	William M. Elliott, Jr. OF	2
Leesville:		
First-Holly Grove	Chris A. Blanchard	1
Korean	Wansik Joo RM	2
Mt. Zion-Macedonia-Haskin Chapel	(Robert M. Eckerle, Jr. PL)	9
Associate	(Lee Eckerle PL)	2
Merryville	(Kenneth Doyle Valentine PL)	1
Moss Bluff	Daniel P. Gleason	5
Oakdale	Elizabeth M. Northen PE	3
Oberlin-Basile	(Jerold R. Hoffpauir PL)	9
Raymond-Elton	(Thomas C. Beeler FL)	4
Roanoke-Crowley, Wesley	(Truman Staggs PL)	1
Squyres	(Raymond H. Leidig, Jr. FL)	3
Sulphur:		
Henning Memorial	C. Richard Hoffpauir	7
Associate	Tracy L. MacKenzie	10
Maplewood	John M. Higginbotham, Jr.	1
Wesley-Hackberry	Leon A. Boggs	9
Sweetlake	Wayne G. Taylor	5
Vinton, Welsh Memorial	(Jerry L. Johnson SP)	4
Welsh:		
First-Hayes	Mark J. Goins	1
Jones-Jennings, Mallalieu	(Marvette J. Thomas SP)	6
Westlake	Ted D. Freeland	2
MONROE DISTRICT		
District Superintendent	Marie Palmer Williams	5
Bartholomew-Beekman	(Jo Ann Sims PL)	1
Baskin	T.B.S.	
Bastrop:		
First-Collinston	Roy Bryan Moore	1
Memorial-Mer Rouge	John G. Deschner	4
Mt. Olive	(Johnny M. Riley, Jr. PL)	5
Boeuf Prairie	Lillard R. Beville RM	1
Columbia-Hebert	(Pamela Fitch Roy)	2
Crew Lake-Mangham	Jeffery D. Conner	1
Delhi-Crowville	(Joseph L. Rountree)	2
Epps	(Lloyd E. Scott RL)	1
Ferriday-Clayton	Robert G. Rowland	2
Grayson	Howard L. Hudson RM	2
Kilbourne-Locust Grove	(Linda K. Shepherd FL)	4
Lake Providence	Donald R. Morgan	1
Little Creek	Howard B. Childs RM	2
Monroe:		
First	Larry R. Stafford	7
Associate	Terry A. Love	7
Minister of Music		
Hope-St Paul	Kem F. Alexander FD	2
Lea Joyner Memorial	(Jack Holmes, Jr.)	3
Associate	Weldon C. Bares	2
Minister of Music	(Marcelle F. Crow PL)	3
Minister of Evangelism	(Betty L. Swanson PL)	1
Minister of Visitation	(Mary Nann McMullen PL)	1
Memorial	Isaac A. Patton, Jr. RM	10
Reveille-Union	Jayne Trammell-Kelly	3
St. James	(A. Richard Poss RA)	3
St. Mark's	(Mary Anne Collie PL)	1
St. Paul's	Juliet A. Deschner	4
Associate	Richard H. Humphries	3
Associate	Kevin D. Smith OF	3
Newellton	(Murdock M. Snelling RL)	3

Oak Grove-Pioneer	Joe A. Hoover	2
Oak Ridge	(Louis W. Redden PL)	4
Rayville-Holly Ridge	R. Ray Spiller	3
St. Andrew's	Jack D. Phelps RM	2
St. Joseph-Waterproof	Kibbie E. Hatfield	6
St. Peter	(Alvin Eave, Sr. PL)	4
Sicily Island-Harrisonburg		
Samuel P. Emanuel OF		2
Tallulah	(Fred W. Fulton, IV FL)	3
Vidalia	T.B.S.	
Washington Circuit:	(Anice N. Moses SP)	4
West Monroe:		
Asbury	Rebecca D. Conner	1
Claiborne-WilHITE	(Robert D. Hayes FL)	1
Faith	Steven R. Kelly	3
First	Karl Sherman Klaus	3
McGuire	Michael T. Head	5
Woodlawn	(Linda E. Sabin PL)	2
Winnsboro-Gilbert	William A. Moon, III	2
Wisner	(Frances I. Guy PL)	3

NEW ORLEANS DISTRICT

District Superintendent	Freddie C. Henderson	4
Belle Chasse	Alfred Bakewell, III	1
Buras, Trinity-Hope Chapel	(Gene M. Faurie FL)	6
Chalmette, Covenant	Richard O. Teeter	6
Destrehan, St. Charles	J. Thomas Logan	3
Associate-Golden Cross Ministries	(Earline T. Guidry FL)	7
Golden Meadow-Grand Isle	(Regina B. Hickman)	1
Gretna:		
Boynton	Isaac H. Bivens OE	7
Gretna	Frank S. Harris III	1
Hahnville, St. James	T.B.S.	
Kenner:		
First	William A. Rowell, Jr.	4
Messiah-El Mesias	Samuel Calvo OE	3
LaPlace:		
First	Kenneth M. Graham, Jr.	7
Ninde Chapel	(Horace Brumfield PL)	1
Luling	Michael L. Hammett	6
Metairie:		
Metairie	Rhonda E. Feurtado	2
Munholland	T. Nichols Evans, Jr.	10
St. Matthew's	H. A. Harrington, Jr.	7
New Orleans:		
Algiers, First	Walter L. Parker, Jr.	1
Asbury-St. Matthew	Andrew J. Douglas RM	14
Aurora	M. Eugene Finnell	1
Bethany	Hadley R. Edwards	5
Brooks-Shaw Temple		
Dale E. Branch		5
Carrollton	Alexis Brent PE	1
Cornerstone	James F. Haynes	2
Felicity	(Marva L. Mitchell FL)	13
First	W. Dwight Ramsey	4
First Street	Abraham E. Davis	28
Grace	(Walter B. Pennington PL)	4
Hartzell-Kenner, Thomas		
Karl M. Clark		7
Haven-Trinity	Davis W. Clark	1
Jefferson	Judith A. Shema	1
John Wesley:		
Co-Pastor	Helena Wright-Butler RM	2
Co-Pastor	(Samuel E. Butler, Sr. FL)	1
Korean	Duck Yun Cha OE	3
LaHarpe-Thompson	William L. Jones	11
Lake Vista	Norwood N. Hingle, III	3
Mount Zion	Victor T. McCullough	4
Associate	(Joseph R. Wilson PL)	3
Napoleon Avenue	(William V. Turner PL)	1
Parker Memorial	(W. Craig Gilliam)	9
Peck-Delgado	(Patricia W. Roland FL)	2
Peoples	(Constance R. Saison FL)	1
Philips Memorial	L. Stacy Cowan OF	4
Rayne Memorial	Donald C. Cottrill	2
Ross-Williams	(Burnell Bell FL)	18
St. Luke's	Wesley C. Reagan RM	10
St. Mark's	Gregor A. Dike	7
St. Paul's	Ellen J. Blue	2
St. Philip	(Leslie M. Taylor, Sr. PL)	4
Trinity of Gentilly	James W. Barrett, Jr.	5
Wesley	(Samuel E. Butler, Sr. FL)	8
NORTH SHORE DISTRICT		
District Superintendent	Grayson B. Watson	4
Amite-Independence	William H. Willis, Sr.	2
Angie, Wesley Ray-Mary's Chapel-Live Oak	(Bruce L. Brown FL)	4
Bogalusa:		
Elizabeth Sullivan Memorial		
Hulen C. Warren, Jr.		3
Thirkield-Harry's Chapel	(Louis A. Smith PL)	11
Bush	Kari D. Wood RM	32
Covington:		
First	G. Larry Maxwell, Sr.	1
Fitzgerald-Waldheim	(Percy M. Frazier)	9
Day's-Center-Darlington	Larry D. Robertson RM	5

Denham Springs:		
First	Wybra J. Price, II	1
Associate	Monica Monk PE	1
Roberts-St. Luke	Alonzo J. Campbell	4
Franklinton:		
Centenary-Fisher	Lyndle R. Bullard	2
Winan-Hayes Chapel	Terrence S. August	22
Greensburg-Wesley Chapel		
	William G. Sewell OF	3
Hammond, First	Ricky R. Willis	2
James Chapel	T.B.S.	
Kentwood-Mt. Hermon	(Fred B. Moore, Jr. RA)	5
Lacombe	(Lawrence K. Benson PL)	4
Lee's Landing	(Carol R. Richardson PL)	4
Livingston	(Richard W. Davis PL)	3
Loranger-Cooper's Chapel		
	(Emile E. Tosso FL)	5
Madisonville, North Cross		
	Flint E. Shea	3
Mandeville:		
Church of the Servant		
	Thomas L. Howe, Jr.	1
Newell	(Nolan M. Robinson PL)	11
St. Timothy-On-The-North Shore		
	James W. Mitchell	7
Associate	Brady S. Whitton PE	2
Associate	(Robert H. Chance, Jr. PL)	4
Pastor Emeritus	J. Lawrence Maddin RM	2
Pearl River	Timothy M. Smith	2
Pine Grove-Montpelier-Nesom Mem.		
Eddie E. Morgan, Jr. RM		3
Pine Ridge-Tangipahoa	(Clint Lovell FL)	3
Ponchatoula:		
First	Robert L. Deich	4
Wesley Chapel-Wesley Fd.,SLU		
	(Debra M. Peplow SP)	5
Slidell:		
Aldersgate	David F. Fortuna	2
Associate	Joshua Milliron PE	2
First	Jerry G. Hilbun	1
Associate	John M. Lee RM	6
Associate	(Allan W. Anderson, Jr. PL)	6
Hartzell Mt. Zion	Darlene Moore-James	7
Springfield:		
First-Huff Chapel-Maurepas		
	(William F. Foster FL)	1
St. James	T.B.S.	
Sun	T.B.S.	
Varnado	Ester L. Hammond RM	8
Walker:		
First-Mangum Chapel		
	(Wanda S. Cosentino FL)	3
Friendship-Corbin	(Lewis M. Morris, Jr. PL)	12
Watson, Live Oak	(Mark E. Crosby)	6

RUSTON DISTRICT

District Superintendent	Jimmie D. Pyles	7
Ansley	T.B.S.	
Arcadia-Mt. Mariah	A. Wayne Evans	4
Arizona	(William J. Maxey PL)	10
Athens	(Charles R. Penuell PL)	6
Bernice-Beech Grove-Summerfield		
	Johnie W. Adkins, Jr. OF	1
Beulah	T.B.S.	
Bienville	(William R. Higgs PL)	9
Brushwood	T.B.S.	
Centerpoint	T.B.S.	
Chatham-Concord	(Homer V. Bailes RA)	2
Choudrant-Douglas	Raymond M. Crofoot RM	12
Cotton Valley	(Dorcas A. Thornton PL)	2
Downsville-Bethel	(Owen H. Peyton Sr.)	2
Doyline	T.B.S.	
Dubach-Harmony Chapel	Jon M. Lord	4
Eros-Antioch, Eros	Cage L. McLemore RM	1
Farmerville	(John G. Hankins)	4
Gibbsland-Oak Grove	H. Elizabeth Love PE	1
Haynesville-Shongaloo	Byron W. Putnam	3
Hefflin	(Carol Heard PL)	2
Hodge-Dodson-New Hope		
	Joseph E. Hamilton	3
Homer-Wesley Chapel	David B. Dietzel	5
Indian Village	T.B.S.	
Jonesboro	(L. Wayne Howington)	1
Lisbon	T.B.S.	
Marion-Bird's Chapel	W. Ed Parks, Sr. RM	5
Memorial-Salem	M. Stuart Sherman	3
Minden:		
First	J. Ryan Horton, Jr.	4
Lakeview	T. Lynn Malone, Jr.	1
Mount Zion	John N. Williams	5
Pilgrim Rest	(Samuel L. Bradley PL)	9
Pine Grove	T.B.S.	
Pleasant Valley	(Joe E. Hunter RL)	5
Quitman-Clay	Nancy E. Wofford PE	1
Ringgold-Castor	Thomas B. Freeman OF	2
Ruston:		
Grace	Kenneth R. Bowman	2
Trinity	Fred B. Wideman	7
Associate	Andy R. Hurst	2
Associate	M. Rolly Walker RM	23
Associate	(Brian Mercer FL)	1
Wesley Chapel	T.B.S.	
Sibley	T.B.S.	

Simsboro, Antioch	T.B.S.	
Springhill	Charles R. Langford	2
Whitehall-Colquitt-Evergreen		
	(David G. Bazer PL)	9

SHREVEPORT DISTRICT

District Superintendent	William D. Peoples	3
Benton	Mark Bray	2
Bethel	(Charles & Frances J. Freeman PL)	3
Blanchard	L. Ray Branton RM	2
Bossier City:		
Asbury	Barry E. Hughes	1
Barksdale	Paul C. Carroll, Sr. RM	6
Fellowship	Jonathan W. Beck	1
First	Larry G. Miller	4
Associate	(Kevin D. Townsend FL)	1
Associate	(H. Austin Smith RA)	14
Coushatta-Wesley Chapel		
	Ellen B. Montegudo	1
Cross Roads-Hall Summit		
	(Carl D. Munyon PL)	1
Greenwood-Bethany	S. Kemper Smith	1
Haughton, Love Chapel	Ellen Alston	2
Hosston-Gilliam-Belcher	Emile A. Rousseau, Jr. OF	1
Ida	Jerry A. Means RM	2
Keithville, McDonald-Fairview		
	(Donny R. Nedd PL)	5
Logansport-Longstreet	W. Mark Strickland	4
Mansfield:		
First-Grand Cane	Irvin J. Boudreaux OF	1
Pleasant Valley-Mt. Zion-New Light		
	(Oscar E. Player)	12
Shady Grove-Bonchrest		
	George L. Thomas RM	3
Wesley-Rosa-St. Matthew		
	S. Charles Byrd OE	5
Many	Charles Crews	3
Mooringsport-Oil City	(Cheryl L. Nelson FL)	2
Plain Dealing-Walker's Chapel		
	Henry M. Hamilton	4
Pleasant Hill-Pelican	(Doris R. Sheppard RL)	2
Shiloh-Keatchie	(Mary Jo Babcock PL)	2
Shreveport:		
Broadmoor	Steven M. Spurlock	3
Associate	M. Quinn O'Bannon PE	2
Associate	Conrad P. Edwards RM	3
Pastor Emeritus		
	George F. Pearce, Jr. RM	20
Caddo Heights	(Thomas A. Wilson RA)	1
Christ	Larry D. O'Dell	4
Associate	Jonathan King PE	1
Ellerbe Road-Haughton		
	(Judith D. Bazer)	6
Fairfield-Faith	(Willie E. Jackson, Jr. FL)	13
First	R. Pat Day	9
Associate	Willis W. Dear	5
Associate	Douglas M. Baker OE	3
Associate	William R. Mayo RM	16
Minister of Music		
	(Will K. Andress FL)	30
Scholar in Residence		
	Donald A. Webb RM	9
Minister of Visitation		
	William E. Nolan RM	4
Grace Community	Robert A. Weber	10
Associate	(Clay K. McConnell FL)	2
Lakeview	Charles B. Humphreys	4
Mangum	Gregory R. Davis	3
Morningside	Richard L. Cockburn	2
Mt. Zion-Johnson Chapel		
	(Clyde T. Smith PL)	5
Noel	Steven W. Caraway	4
Associate	M. Theresa McConnell	3
North Highlands	Sandra B. Huber	2
St. James-Jewella	Willie L. Henry	9
St. Luke's	Steven J. Porter	2
St. Paul-Round Grove		
	Kenneth M. Fisher	2
Summer Grove	Bryan S. Dauphin	5
Trinity-Keithville	(David R. Melville FL)	1
Vivian	Ramona Lynn Bethley	2
Zwolle-Bayou Scie	Bonita C. Davis PE	2

SPECIAL APPOINTMENTS WITHIN CONNECTIONAL STRUCTURE

Conference Staff		
Director of Volunteers in Mission		
	Larry D. Norman BR	4
Sr. Advisor/Consult., LA UM Foundation		
	Kenneth R. Reed RM BR	4
Executive Director of Administrative Services/Treasurer/Secretary/Statistician		
	Carl E. Rhoads, III BR	4
Director of Special Ministries		
	Alonzo J. Campbell NS	7
Center for Pastoral Effectiveness		
Director of Spiritual Formation		
	Carole Cotton-Winn NS	4
Director of Parish Development		
	John M. Winn, Jr. RM NS	12

Staff of General Agencies

Director of UMCOR Sager Brown, GBGM		
	Robert E. Townsend AC	2
Dir. Ann. Conf. Relations, GBHE&M		
	Graham P. Matthews, Jr. NO	3

Faculty and Administrators of United Methodist Theological Schools and Other Educational Institutions

Asst. Professor of Congregational Leadership, St. Paul School of Theology, Kansas City, MO		
	Robert K. Martin AL	2
Asst. Prof. Of Theology, St. Joseph's University, Philadelphia, PA		
	Millicent C. Feske NO	9
President, The Jefferson Circle		
	David G. Trickett NO	14
Chap./Dir., Centenary Clg. Schl. Church Careers		
	M. Jack O'Dell SH	3
Campus Ministers		
Wesley-Westminster, Northwestern		
	Ellis Newman PE AL	2
LSU	Shawn M. Anglim PE BR	2
Southern University	George W.C. Calvin, Sr. BR	7
SUNO	Connie Breaux FD NO	5
UNO	Alexis Brent PE NO	1
Tulane University	Judith A. Shema NO	5
Wesley Foundation, Grambling State University		
	Derrick D. Hills RS	7
Wesley Foundation, Louisiana Tech University		
	Scott Wright RS	4

APPOINTED IN OTHER ANNUAL CONFERENCES

North Carolina	Joe D. Connelly NO	2
Memphis	W. Arnold Roberts NO	1
Missouri West	Brian R. Barron SH	3

SPECIAL APPOINTMENTS TO EXTENSION MINISTRIES

Armed Forces and Veterans Administration Chaplaincy		
US Air Force	W. Scott Adams SH	8
US Army	Macky R. Giles SH	5
Health Care Fields, Community Service Organizations and Other Related Ministries		
Chaplain, Our Lady of Lourdes, Lafayette		
	Walton C. Dunbar AC	3
Chap., Tri-Cities Hospice & Counseling Ctr., Kennewick, WA		
	Jose Garcia AC	3
Chaplain, Lafayette General Medical Ctr.		
	Theo S. Standley RM AC	5
Exec. Dir., Wesleyan Sr. Living Foundation.		
	Ronald D. Dauphin BR	1
Staff Chaplain, Our Lady of the Lake Hosp., BR		
	Barbara S. Duke BR	4
Staff Chap., Univ. of Alabama Hosp., Birmingham		
	Virginia Millet BR	7
Exec. Vice President, Victorious Christian Living		
	John H. Sewell BR	9
Chaplain, Memorial Hospital, Lake Charles		
	David R. DeWitt LC	9
Chap., Harris County Psych Ctr., Houston, TX		
	A. Swindell Hodges LC	3
Chap., Houston Hospice, North Ofc., Houston TX		
	Daniel H. Miller LC	8
Spiritual Counselor & Psychotherapist, Cancer Treatment Center, St. Vincent Hosp., Santa Fe, NM		
	Lou Ann Asbury MN	1
Dir. of Development, Methodist Children's Home		
	Paul E. Sabin MN	8
St. Thomas/Irish Channel Consortium		
	C. David Billings, Jr. NO	8
Exec. Director, St. Mark's Comm. Center		
	Gregor A. Dike NO	6
Director of Clinical Hypnotherapy, Pendleton Hospital		
	Paul G. Durbin RM NO	26
McFarland Institute	(W. Craig Gilliam) NO	4
Chaplain/Pastoral Counselor, M.D. Anderson Hospital, Houston, TX		
	Maria J. Kennedy NO	3
Health Source	Roy B. Nash NO	2
Chap./Dir. Pastoral Care, Pendleton Hospital		
	Judy E. Nelson NO	20
Wesley Comm. Center, Atlanta, GBGM		
	William C. Taylor NO	19
Chap./Dir. of Christ. Ed., Meth. Child. Home		
	Mickey D. Stringfield RS	8
Evergreen Ministries	R. Stephen Casey SH	12

APPOINTMENTS BEYOND THE MINISTRY USUALLY EXTENDED THROUGH THE LOCAL CHURCH

British Methodist	Randall K. Nichols BR	3
Exec. Dir., Creative Ministries Association,		
Durham, North Carolina	Cathy S. Carlson MN	26

SPECIAL APPOINTMENTS TO OTHER VALID MINISTRIES

Appointed to Attend School		
Atlanta Theological Association, Columbia Theological Seminary	JoBeth Kee-Rees PM NO	4
Incapacity Leave		
Sidney Earl Irving	AL	21
Riley W. Sanson, Jr. OF	AL	2
John C. Coker, Sr.	BR	2
J. Sidney Montegudo FD.	BR	2
Samuel D. Reeves	BR	3
Lance E. Brown PM	NO	5
(Charles R. Cosentino FL)	NS	3
(Michael D. Corrigan FL)	SH	4
Leave of Absence		
Debra K. Brazzel	AC	4
Carolyn Stokes Lambert	BR	1
Terry L. Mulkey	BR	3
Lusinda T. M. Warren FD	BR	2
Lorris M. Wimberly	BR	2
Erika S. Fadel	NO	7
Cindy M. Graber PM	SH	2
Walter L. Parr, Jr.	SH	1
Charles B. Roper	SH	2
Benjamin Santana-Ruiz PE	SH	1
Family Leave		
John G. Whitley	BR	1
Deacons In Full Connection		
Min. of Youth & Family Ministries, Asbury, Lafayette		
	Sharon D. Zehner	AC
Dir. of Christian Ed., First, Zachary		
	Barbara Einsel	BR
Min. of Christian Ed., First, Baton Rouge		
	Mary Beth Foye	BR
Minister of Program, Broadmoor, Baton Rouge		
	John Edd Harper	BR
Director, Conference Mission Resourcing		
	Bernadine Johnson	BR
Min. of Christian Education, Broadmoor, Baton Rouge		
	Sue Kelly	BR
Dir. of Christian Ed., St. Peter, Maringouin		
	Brunetta A. Shamlin	BR
Executive Director, Conf. Missions & Ministries		
	Rena M. Yocom	BR
Minister of Music, First, Monroe		
	Kem F. Alexander	MN
Div. of General Bd. Of Higher Educ. & Ministry		
	Joaquin Garcia	MN
SUNO	Connie Breaux	NO
Dir. of Christian Education, Philips Memorial		
	Barbara M. Hamilton	NO
District Missioner	Barbara L. Murray	NO
Min. of Christian Education, Rayne Memorial		
	Carol L. Sherer	NO
Bethany	Inez D. Williams	NO
Director of Christian Education, First, Slidell		
	Carolyn B. Foster	NS
Minister of Music, Trinity	R. Michael Cloud	RS
Dir. Of Lay Min. & Small Grps., First, Shreveport		
	Pamela G. Crews	SH
Nurse Practitioner/Inst. Dept. Ped., LSU Medical		
	Hubert F. Debo	SH
Min. of Discipleship & Adult Min., First, Shreveport		
	Regina L. Wren	SH
Probationary Deacons		
Min. of Discipleship & Missions, Broadmoor		
	Amy K. Mercer	BR
Director, Conference Worship & Education Ministries		
	Elaine Smith	BR
Diaconal Ministers		
Director Christian Education, Munholland		
	Janet C. Cavalier	NO
Dir., YWCA Women's Crisis Services, Noel		
	Rachel L. Scott	SH
Deaconesses		
Librarian, St. Mary's Day School, Alexandria		
	Carolina Labrada	AL
Community Services, Baton Rouge		
	Hallique Dawson	BR
	Juanita L. Ivie R	NO
	Evelyn Murphree R	NO
Transferred In		
(Mary Anne Collie PL)	CME	June 1, 2001
Walton C. Dunbar	New Mexico	June 1, 2001
William M. Elliott, Jr. PM	CME	June 1, 2001

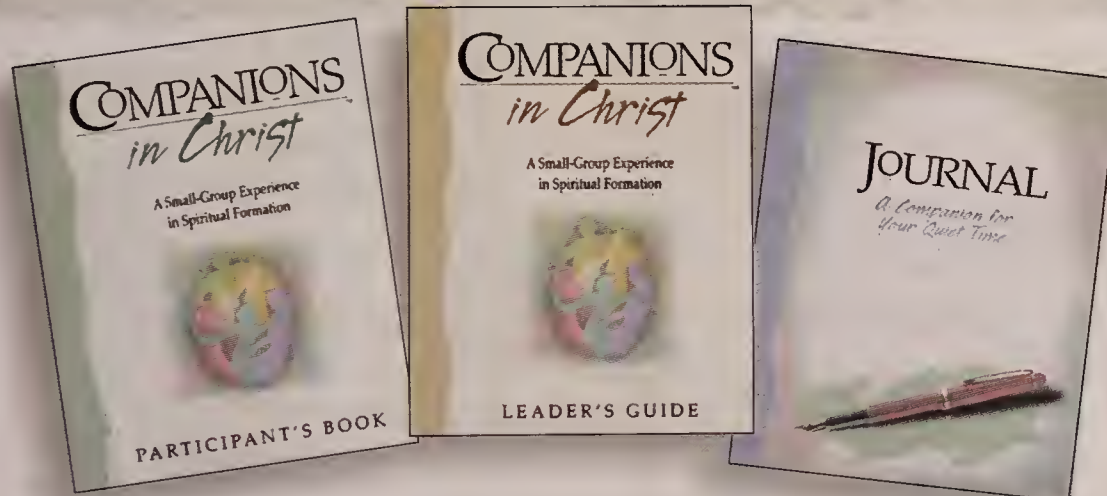
Annual Conference attendees help create health kits in 'Hands-on Mission'

Members attending Annual Conference paused on Tuesday afternoon to assemble 400 health kits destined for the UMCOR Sager-Brown Depot in Baldwin. Sarah Schoeffler, Mission in Motion coordinator, and Bishop William W. Hutchinson guided participants through the assembly process. In addition, eight agencies were given a van-load of school supplies collected from the nine Conference districts. Those benefiting included the United Methodist Mission Center in Baton Rouge, People's Community Center and St. Mark's Community Center in New Orleans, UMCOR Sager-Brown, the Dulac Cooperative Ministry, and the three Conference children's homes.

Photos by Joshua Lewis



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- Exploring Spiritual Guidance: The Spirit of Christ (five weeks)
- Closing Retreat

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"...the spirit has been so present and powerful in our midst."

"...rich beyond my imagining."

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The Network offers unique opportunities and support to *Companions in Christ* groups and leaders. Groups are encouraged to link with others outside their congregation to offer encouragement, prayer, or share in outreach. Leaders receive useful tools, resource information, and opportunities to share and receive valuable insights.

Leader Training Events

Leaders will enrich the *Companions in Christ* experience for their group by participating in at least one of the training options. One-day Leader Orientations and Three-day Leader Trainings are scheduled across the country beginning in May 2001. A complimentary copy of the *Leader's Guide*, *Participant's Book* and *Journal* are included in the registration fee.

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Louisiana Conference Center • Alexandria, Louisiana
Date: August 3, 2001
Leaders: Rev. Carole Cotton Winn
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**UPPER
ROOM**
MINISTRIES

See Tithe for Missions, page 2

ON THE JOURNEY

God Is There

Two great things have happened since I last wrote to you. The trip to Russia was absolutely fantastic! The trip to Fayetteville, Arkansas was superb! Worlds apart in location, but arms linked in purpose. The church was seen at her finest, working together to make herself stronger for the future and for the present.

When I last wrote, I was preparing to leave for Russia the next morning. Eleven of us from Louisiana were joined by Marilyn Oden of Dallas, Texas to fly to Ekaterinberg, Russia to participate in the dedication of First United Methodist Church of Ekaterinberg. The trip was wonderful, introducing me to a part of the world I had never seen. The fellowship with those who traveled together was truly special. The sights we saw and the shopping we did was most enjoyable. But the real joy of it all came when I saw for the first time the new church building that houses First United Methodist Church! A stately structure that faces one of the busiest intersections in the city, the church boasts a tall tower that is topped with a bold cross. It makes a beautiful statement to the passers-by that something holy happens in that space.

After several hours of work on the building it was ready for the dedicatory service on Sunday, June 17. The congregation plus visitors numbered in the vicinity of 350-400 that morning. The singing was joyful and uplifting. Special choirs brought us to tears as they sang music that was familiar to our ear as well as the haunting melodies of their native land. The speeches made by visiting pastors and government officials were warm and welcoming. The preaching by Bishop Rudiger Minor was challenging and exciting. The looks on the faces of the congregation were priceless as they celebrated this milestone in their ten year history. And all the while a sacred "tingling" passed through my being as I marveled at the goodness and greatness of God.

It was a humble blessing to speak on behalf of the United Methodists in Louisiana who made much of this possible. The dedicated and inspired vision from the beginning has come to fruition and the church that was birthed in 1991 is now up and running like a jubilant ten year old! The air was electric and the atmosphere was holy. It was one of the highest moments of my life to stand in the midst of eternity and witness this miraculous feat.

I couldn't begin to list names of those who pioneered this effort. You know in your own experience who they are. To each of you, whoever and wherever you may be, I bow my knee in gratitude to you. I know many of you who are reading this column were instrumental in the founding of the church and in the provision of supervision for her growth. You have sent and participated in work teams who have faithfully gone to render help, and who have given substantially of your financial resources to make it all a possibility. I wish each of you could have stood with me and worshiped with those



Bishop William W. Hutchinson

who have come to follow Jesus through this church. It would have warmed your heart just as it did mine. It would make you grateful you sacrificed even a little so that others could have much. It was another star in the crown of the

Kingdom of God, and you helped put it there.

The United Methodist Church is growing healthily and rapidly in Russia. Praise God from whom all blessings flow! I'm so glad I have had even a small place in this great mission. Thanks for letting me go and bring greetings from each of you.

We returned from Russia on a Tuesday morning and Kay and I left that afternoon for Mount Sequoyah in Fayetteville, Arkansas where we were part of a College of Bishops meeting and a week-end event called "Generations Uniting Together." All nine districts from Louisiana were represented by the District Superintendent, at least one youth, and an adult worker with youth. We spent three days together talking about how we in different generations can better communicate with each other and how we can support one another in our spiritual walk. It was such a joy to sit with teen-agers and hear of their journey and have them want to hear of mine.

Worship at Mount Sequoyah was energized and joyful. We sang contemporary songs and "golden oldies." We heard fine preaching from an adult worker with youth, a youth, and a bishop. We shared communion together twice. We visited together, danced together, swam together and shared our hearts together. It was another holy endeavor. And again, you have made it possible by your undiluted commitment to youth and living in faith together. We in Louisiana will be a stronger church as a result, because those teams of persons who were present in Fayetteville will be working in each district in the immediate future to build further the bridge that will cross between adult and youth and will bring us closer together and thus closer to our God.

So, I have been in two distinctly different worlds. And the blessing is that I found both of them to be so like the other. The church is the church whether it is in Ekaterinberg or in Fayetteville. People are God's children whether they speak Russian or Cajun. God is God in all places, in all ages and in all languages.

This path we journey on is so blessed! I'm excited to see where the next steps lead. One thing I know, God will be there!

In Christ's love,

Bill Hutchinson



Louisiana Conference Co-coordinator for Disaster Response Rev. Robert Ross, left, recently attended the first statewide meeting of Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster to help coordinate United Methodist efforts in ongoing flood relief.

Disaster response, from page 1

wallboard," he said.

Ross pointed out that the damage from Tropical Storm Allison is not considered to be of a catastrophic nature. The majority of damage claims are being covered by private insurance, and the rest are absorbed by FEMA. It is anticipated that most of the requests for assistance fielded by the conference will come from handicapped, elderly and poorer citizens.

Also at the LAVOAD meeting, Conference Disaster Coordinator Sue Pugh discovered that nearly 6,000 homes in South Louisiana have been affected by flood waters. "Teams are forming now to offer assistance. We are asking that volunteer teams be limited to 12 members, but Conference churches may send more than one group if the number of volunteers is great," said Pugh.

Pugh and Ross will be identifying United Methodist churches in the Louisiana conference that are willing to house relief teams during the restoration, clean up and construction phases.

Ross is proud of the fact that the Conference has a plan in place, and it is being followed. He is in close contact with the nine District Ministry Teams,

who in turn will assist with organizing volunteer relief teams.

"In any disaster, the first thing to do after relief is to begin organizing a long-range unmet needs committee. Once the agencies have gone home, and the first wave of volunteers have gone home, lots of victims needs remain, such as mental stress, pastoral care needs, monetary assistance and housing assistance," said Ross.

He emphasized the importance of all United Methodists answering the call to help. "Hurricane Andrew came through around nine years ago, so this is an unexpected 'wake up call' for the church. God is calling us to be and do everything we can. As John Wesley taught, we should now do all that we can do, whenever we can do it, for as many as we can."

Persons interested in assisting may contact Rev. Larry Norman, director of Louisiana UM Disaster Response, at the conference office by phoning (225) 346-1646. Monetary gifts may be earmarked for Hurricanes 2001, advance number 982350-4 and sent to the Louisiana Conference, Attn: Julie Stinson, 527 North Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70802.

GRACE Camp rescheduled for August

Grace Camp, a resident camp held for children of incarcerated persons, is rescheduling its June session for Aug. 6-10 at Camp Istrouma near Baton Rouge.

The second session of camp will still be held July 30-Aug. 3 at the Uskichitto

Retreat Center near Lake Charles.

For more information about Grace Camp, contact Rev. Lorris and Becky Wimberly, camp directors, at (225) 642-3338 or write 5470 Bayou Paul Rd., St. Gabriel, LA 70776.

Tithe for Missions, from page 1

"The important thing is to send the request for the 10% donation well before the week of July 27, the first week checks are to be mailed by the U.S. Treasury," writes Brown.

He also suggests that designated funds be earmarked to help fulfill 2001 apportionments, support District or Conference mission projects, or to help

a congregation within the church's District pay out 100% of its 2001 apportionments.

The conference office of Administrative Services will gather information by survey on local response to this initiative so that progress may be reported conference-wide in the fall of this year.

Youth workers seminar slated

An "adult workers with youth" seminar is scheduled for Aug. 24-25 at the conference center in Woodworth. Youth leaders, Sunday school teachers, choir directors and others will examine the topic of spending money effectively for youth related programs.

Michael Reeves, president of the Louisiana United Methodist Foundation, will serve as featured speaker for the two-day workshop. Topics will include

efficient financial planning, money management and "giving back." Cost for the workshop is \$80 (single occupancy) or \$65 (double occupancy).

Registration forms must be received by Aug. 1, and should be mailed to: Louisiana Annual Conference, Attn: Youth Director, 527 North Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70802-5720. For more information, contact Carolyn Dove at (225) 346-1646.



Youth, youth leaders, district superintendents and bishops representing the South Central Jurisdiction convened June 22-24 at Mount Sequoyah for "Generations Uniting Together," a weekend focusing on the key components of local church youth ministry. Bishop William W. Hutchinson was on hand to lend support for the efforts of the 26-member delegation from Louisiana. Topics included "Music of the Generations," "Worship Belongs to the People-Which Ones?," and "Through Thick and Thin: Sustaining Youth Ministry in the Local Church." District teams will bring information from the event back to their respective districts by organizing intergenerational forums to discuss the improvement of adult/youth relationships and interaction.

Retired pastor commended by legislature

Rev. James L. Stovall, retired pastor, was recently recognized and commended for his public service and his contributions to his congregations and communities with the passage of a resolution of commendation passed by both the Louisiana House of Representatives and the Senate.

In addition to his pastoral duties, Stovall continually gave of his spare time to efforts focusing on human rights, education, and prison reform.

The commendation noted Stovall's service as Navy Chaplain during World War II and his appointment as executive director of the Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs from 1979-1980. He was co-organizer and chair of the Angola Educational Foundation and a member-at-large of the Louisiana Commission on Human Rights in 1992.

Stovall has been awarded national commendations such as the Human and Civil Rights Award from the National Association of Educators in Washington, D. C.



Stovall

His wife Alice reports that Stovall is currently hospitalized at Lakewood Quarters with Alzheimer's. "He continues to pastor the residents there any way he can," writes Alice.

Snapshots of Annual Conference



Photos by Joshua Lewis

Bishop William W. Hutchinson tickled the ivories during the District Superintendent Quartet featuring the Reverends Terry Willis, Marie Williams, Leslie Norris and Jimmie Pyles.



Conference United Methodist Men President Joe Kelly says some kind words about retiring Baton Rouge District Superintendent Leslie Norris. There is still time for La. United Methodist Men to enroll for "2001: A UM Men Odyssey" July 12-15 on the campus of Purdue University in West Lafayette, Ind.

CONFERENCE CALENDAR

July

7	La. Conference Center Board of Trustees	La. Conference Center
8	Soil and Environmental Stewardship Day	
9	UMW Committee Meetings	La. Conference Center
10	Faith and Money Workshop for Cabinet Members	Conference Office
10-11	La. Conference Cabinet Meeting - Mission Cabinet	Conference Office
10-13	La. Conference School of Christian Mission	La. Conference Center
17-18	Campus Ministry Meeting	La. Conference Center
2-22	Happening	La. Conference Center



Hot dogs and handbells

Diverse activities have enriched life recently at Magnolia United Methodist Church in Greenwell Springs. The Children's Ministry celebrated its third anniversary with a wieners roast party, top. And Magnolia's handbell choir is going strong after five years of service to the church. The group recently expanded its instruments to encompass three octaves. The choir is led by church organist Rita Chiasson.

Church asks: 'Are you carrying the Cross?'

BY LYN SHEEHAN
DISTRICT COMMUNICATION ADVISOR

"Are you carrying the Cross?" has taken on new meaning for the members of Francis Asbury United Methodist Church.

"Each Sunday, a small wooden cross is passed to a member of the congregation," explained Rev. Bill Strawbridge. "As the cross is passed each week, the one who had the blessing of receiving the cross to carry, has an opportunity to share, during the Worship Service, of

their Faith journey and their experiences during the week while carrying the cross."

The cross has been taken to offices, on shopping trips, to visit neighbors, to visit hospitals, wherever that person carrying the cross, might go.

For the person carrying the cross, it is an ever constant reminder of the Love and Grace received from God, each moment.

For those persons who are encountered, it is an opportunity to also share that Love and Grace that all receive from God.

Strawbridge presented a cross to the congregation when he was first appointed to the church. The cross was damaged several times while being carried and has been replaced with a sturdier one.

The original cross has been placed on the pulpit, as a reminder of the sacrifice of Jesus for each of us.

Ignite leadership through Lay Speaking

"Igniting Servant Leadership through Lay Ministry" is the theme of the 2001 annual Lay Speaking Ministry Retreat to be held August 11 from 8 a.m. - noon.

Christian leadership is not only the task of the clergy. Without lay involvement, our churches cannot do the work of spreading the Good News of salvation through Jesus Christ.

The retreat will be held at the Waddill Outdoor Education Center located at 4142 North Flannery Road in Baton Rouge. The cost is \$5.00 meal fee. Apply through the District Office at 5712 Superior Drive, Baton Rouge, La 70816-8015.

For more information, call, 225-748-8939, 932-5314 or 757-9053.

District to offer Sunday School workshop

Does your church want to grow?

A healthy Sunday School is one of the best ways to grow a healthy church. The Baton Rouge District will offer two opportunities to preview material learn methods to teach the Bible, and local church support and skills in August.

The first workshop will be hosted by First UMC, Baker, on Saturday, August 18, from 9:30 to 11 a.m. The second workshop will be hosted by Francis Asbury UMC, Baton Rouge, from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Both workshops will be led by the Reverends Barbara Einsel and Linda Hagan.

Practical ideas and tips will be presented. Free handouts will be distributed. United Methodist Curriculum and resources will be featured. The workshops will offer seven ways of teaching the Bible. They will also present skills and helps for development of the Sunday School in the local church.

For more information, contact Rev. Barbara Einsel at (225) 654-4818.



St. Peter United Methodist Church in Maringouin has recently seen its Sunday School class balloon from eleven students to more than 50. Pastor Clarence Hillard said Sunday School is considered an extension of worship, which accounts for much of its success.



Devil of a present

Rev. Stephen Fleming shows off his going away present from the United Methodist Men at St. Luke's UMC in Baton Rouge. The men's group heard the pastor needed a pitchfork to work his compost pile. "It won't replace a shepherd's crook," Fleming said, "but it does look like a pretty good motivator." St. Luke's UMM also gave a gift to the Conference Center in Woodworth in honor of their departing pastor. Fleming moved to First UMC, Plaquemine, in June. Pictured are: Percy Green, David McIntyre, Milton Baker, Chuck Dixon, Fleming, Don Gerald, Charles Anderson and Billy Boatler.

Send your church's stories to the District Communication Advisor:

Lyn Sheehan
P.O. Box 250
Jackson, LA 70748
(225) 634-7810
lyn_sheehan@hotmail.com



Youth group finds 'Noah's Ark'

BY TONY FONTENOT

Noah's Ark has been found! In Panama City Beach, Florida?

Noah's Ark is a United Methodist Mission which is an advance special ministry of the AWF Conference. The Junior High Youth of Asbury United Methodist Church of Lafayette, traveled to Noah's Ark for a week of ministry and mission to help the disabled and homeless. Eighteen youth and five adults led by Youth Director Sheri Zehner spent the week of June 25-30 working in the Panama City community. Some of the tasks performed by the

team were painting and yard work at homes of physically handicapped people, sorting clothing at a thrift store and preparing and serving meals at the homeless shelter. The children were very excited to interact with the Noah's Ark Christian ministry band 2x2 (two-by-two).

The youth walked the beach with the band handing out invitations to the band's nightly concerts, which were also attended by the team. Hard work was rewarded with trips to the beach, amusement park, water park and putt putt course.



Members of the youth group at Asbury United Methodist Church in Lafayette travelled to Florida to minister to the homeless and disabled. Youth clean up the yard at one person's home, top. Noah's Ark, a United Methodist mission in Panama City, Fla., housed the group, above. Tony and Pam Fontenot, right, among the five adults on the trip, steal a quiet moment.



First United Methodist Church, Lafayette, secretary Pat McKee and volunteer Dot Thurmond display fruits of the School Uniform Outreach, an ecumenical project to gather uniforms for families who can't afford new ones. These items are being collected: shirts, pants, shorts, dresses, skirts and belts. Clothes should be clean and ready to wear. For more information, contact First UMC at (337) 233-3811.



Mission in Motion Coordinator Sarah Schoeffler stands with supplies recently collected to aid people in flood recovery. Cleaning products and other household items continue to be needed. To contribute, contact Schoeffler at (337) 234-4042.

Voices shine at First UMC, Houma

BY JOYCE THIBODEAUX

The youth of the First United Methodist Church in Houma, La. have come together to "make a joyful noise unto the Lord." It began in 1998, when some church members wanted to organize a choir for youth in grades 4-8. Beth Duet, whose daughter, Sarah, was in fourth grade, agreed to become the choir director.

Duet has a degree in choral music, and has ten years of experience as a choir director. The new choir needed a name. Mrs. Duet explained, "We wanted to spread the light of God's message."

One of the choir members suggested the name, "Voices of Light," and the group voted to adopt that name. The choir began with a group of fourteen members.

They performed at church services and meetings, where they were well received. They received an invitation to perform for a group of UMCOR volunteers at the Sager Brown Center in Baldwin, La. They also produced a special musical presentation for their church, with choir members doing the narration, reading scripture, and singing.

Igniting Ministry planning kit offers tips for greeting new members.

The following is an excerpt from the handbook included in the Igniting Ministry Planning Kit, produced by United Methodist Communications. If your church has not ordered a kit and begun preparations for Open House Month and the Igniting Ministry campaign in September, call (877) 281-6535 to order materials.

Tips for Welcoming and Hospitality Ministries

Consider the first 10 minutes of contact someone has with the church—and the welcoming and hospitality ministries that can take place from the street to the parking lot . . . from the parking lot to the door . . . from the door to the sanctuary (or other places) . . .

Directing Traffic

"Travel From the Parking Lot to the Coffeepot and Back" could be the title of an entire committee. Considering how many decisions someone will need to make just to get to our church, it will be helpful if we keep the rest of the journey as easy as possible.

Employ signs at every juncture to assist people in finding parking and identifying pickup curbs, restrooms,



Experienced greeters are able to recognize visitors by their body language and unfamiliar faces, and are prepared to respond to their needs and questions.

child care, classrooms and fellowship hall. Consider having youth make the signs that express welcome or directions to special classes.

Let the youth have bulletin boards where they can post items that show

they are a part of the life of the church.

Greeters in the form of "traffic directors" can be stationed in the parking lot and in high-traffic halls (or in confusing corridors) to assist guests.

Large churches may want to consider making small, simple floor plans available with the order of service.

Greeters

Position enthusiastic greeters at the front door and ask them to remain for a few minutes after the service has begun for latecomers who need to be greeted.

Experienced greeters are able to recognize visitors by their body language and unfamiliar faces, and are prepared to respond to their needs and questions. Each greeter is trained to offer simple directions about seating, the order of

worship and Bibles or hymnals used in the service.

This personal touch and anticipation of needs is powerful.

Having greeters of all ages who are dedicated to serving visitors will deliver the message that our church is truly a welcoming place. The greeter's responsibility does not end with shuffling people off to the pews.

Greeters can make sure no one is alone any more than they want to be. This may include sitting with them during the service. Greeters make every guest in God's house feel welcome and appreciated.

All Members of the Congregation

Greet each other. Be especially aware of newcomers. Enact the "circle of 10" rule: Anyone, member or guest, who comes within 10 feet of you will be greeted.

Also consider adopting a "rule of three," which says you will not talk to other members for the first three minutes after the service. It takes guests about three minutes to exit the church after worship, and you need to make sure someone has made contact with them before they leave.

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US-2 missionaries to celebrate 50 years

NEW YORK (UMNS) – During the 50 years since its founding, the United Methodist Church's US-2 program has trained about 1,300 young adults between the ages of 20 and 30 to serve in U.S.-based ministries.

Participants from the first group, the Class of 1951-1953, through the current group, the Class of 2000-2002, are invited to a celebration of the program's half-century mark Aug. 2-5 in Birmingham, Ala.

The registration deadline has been extended to July 15.

The United Methodist Board of Global Ministries administers the program.

More information on the Birmingham celebration is available by sending an e-mail to rpeagler@aol.com

or calling Robin Peagler at (212) 870-3661. A special Web page, <http://gbgm-umc.org/news/2001/june/pioneering.htm> has forms for registration, accommodations and schedule.

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—New Address—

On the Web

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Conference on the Internet at

<http://www.la-umc.org>

FULL-TIME YOUTH DIRECTOR

Immediate opening at Noel United Methodist Church in Shreveport. Bachelor's degree, organizational skills, spiritual depth/maturity and United Methodist background preferred. Send resume with references to Youth Director Search Committee, 520 Herndon Street, Shreveport, LA, 71101 by July 27, 2001.

FULL-TIME YOUTH DIRECTOR/MINISTER

Broadmoor United Methodist Church in Baton Rouge is a 4,600-member suburban church with 80+ active youth in grades 7-12. Bachelor's degree, 3 years previous experience, organizational skills, spiritual depth/maturity and UM background preferred. Send resume and references to Emily Freeman, 3934 Deerfield Lane, Baton Rouge, LA, 70816 by July 31. For additional information, call (225) 924-6269.

Cuban Methodist Church sees revival

UMNS – The Methodist Church in Cuba is experiencing a revival through increased ministry and a doubling of membership, according to an official of the World Methodist Council.

The church has doubled in membership to 16,000 in the past two years, said the Rev. H. Eddie Fox, world director of evangelism for the council. Fox, based in Nashville, Tenn., visited Cuba May 15-22.

"The people called Methodist in Cuba are in the midst of a tremendous revival and renewal," he said. "They are being sustained in power in challenging and difficult situations, and they are confident that God has opened a wide door to them."

This year is "the kairos moment in Cuba, by the grace of God," Fox said. Three years ago, he could not get a visa to visit the Methodist Church in Cuba, but today "we are witnessing a church which is totally open to the power and presence of the Holy Spirit," he said.

Fox also attended the Second Congress on Evangelism for the church in Cuba May 19-20. The congress brought together 323 missionary leaders, evangelists, pastors and other guests. The first congress was held 23 years ago.

Church leaders invited Fox and the Rev. Winston Worrell, with World Methodist Evangelism in Atlanta, to preach and teach about faith sharing. The program was based on World Evangelism's Faith-Sharing New Testament With Psalms, in the New Revised Standard Version.

The Faith-Sharing New Testament is published in 30 languages, and the Methodist Church in Mexico is publishing a Spanish version. World Methodist Evangelism has committed to send 5,000 of the books to the Methodist Church in Cuba because many people do not have the complete New Testament in their language.

"Christ Jesus for Cuba is at the heart of the good news of the Gospel offered by the people called Methodists," Fox said. "And at the Congress on

Evangelism at Camp Canaan, the Methodist people have claimed the promises of God and are determined to offer Cuba for Christ."

The Cuban church gained momentum throughout the 1990s, according to Bishop Ricardo Periera, who leads the church. It had stagnated and membership had fallen during the '60s, but resurgence began in the 1980s, after the people began praying and seeking to be faithful and authentic Methodists, he said.

The membership increased from 5,000 in 1990 to 16,000 at the end of last year. More than 65 percent of worshipers today are under 30 years old, Fox said. Most of the pastors are also young in both age and faith.

In the past five years, the church has established 500 missionary congregations or house churches headed by non-salaried lay missionary leaders. The leaders need bicycles for transportation to the mission stations, Fox said. World Methodist Evangelism has launched a project called "EVANGEBICY" to buy 100 bicycles, at \$115 each, for the missionaries. A bicycle in Cuba is called "bicy." World Methodist Evangelism wants to surpass 100 bicycles and provide transport for at least 400 missionaries.

The United Methodist Church's Florida Annual (regional) Conference has been involved in a covenant agreement with the Methodist Church in Cuba for a few years.

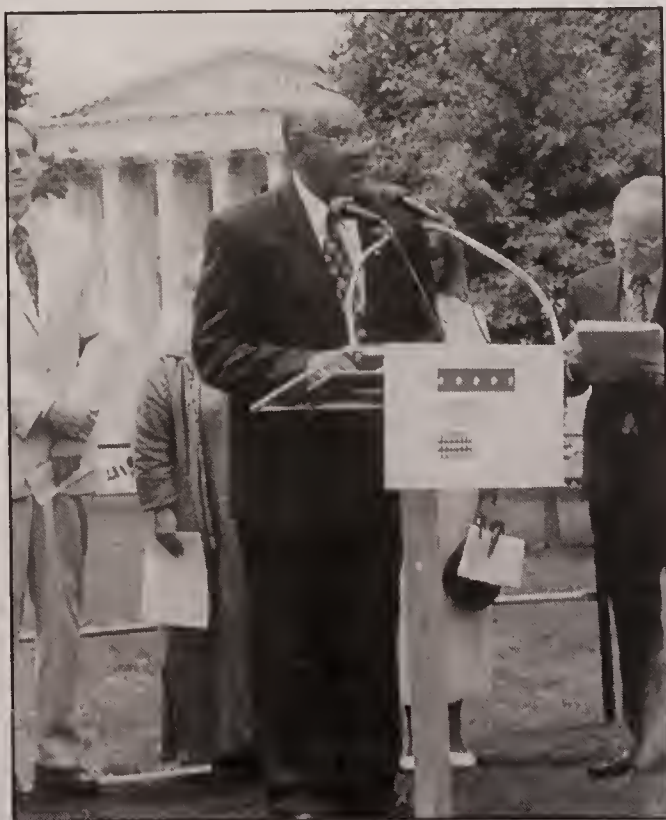
Fox rejoiced in the strength that the covenant provides to both ends of the connection. "Through the covenant, the churches in Cuba and Florida share with one another what God has provided to each of them."

For more information on EVANGEBICY or the Faith-Sharing New Testament, contact Fox at (615) 340-7541 or by e-mail at worldevangelism@scarrittben-nett.org.



A UMNS photo courtesy of Rev. H. Eddie Fox

CUBAN CHURCH GROWING — The Rev. H. Eddie Fox (second from left) helps lead prayer during the Second Congress on Evangelism for the Methodist Church in Cuba. The church is experiencing a revival through increased ministry and a doubling of membership, said Fox, world director of evangelism for the World Methodist Council.



Bishop speaks on environmental justice

WASHINGTON (UMNS) – The concept of human beings as stewards of God's creation united about 200 people who rallied for environmental justice on the east lawn of the U.S. Capitol building May 22.

"We know that we as human beings are responsible for the ways in which we use and abuse [God's creation]," said Bishop Melvin Talbert, ecumenical officer of the United Methodist Council of Bishops. "Because we know so much is at stake, we dare not remain silent."

Most people in his audience were participants in a four-day environmental justice ministry conference sponsored by the National Council of Churches. Other registrants were conducting visits with their senators and representatives.

About 50 of the rally participants formed a human bar graph illustrating the disproportionate carbon dioxide emissions among three areas: the United

States with 4.5 percent of the world population puts out 25 percent of the emissions; the European Union with 6 percent of the people emits 15 percent of the carbon dioxide; and China with 21 percent of the world population creates 11 percent of the emissions, based on the World Resources Institute figures for 1999.

One of several speakers, Talbert called on the president, Congress and the American people to seek the common good; to be good stewards of God's creation; and to do justice and what is right for future generations. We as human beings are stewards of God's creation. We have the moral obligation to choose safe, clean and sustainable sources of energy to protect God's creation."

"We call for an energy policy that will be an investment in social and economic justice here and around the world. ... Price gouging is not justice."

Talbert decried the Bush administration's announcement that it will not keep the Kyoto Protocol dealing with climate change and Bush's proposal of tax cuts "as the primary means for addressing the current energy crisis without confronting the outrageous actions of oil companies."

United Methodist Bishop Melvin G. Talbert, ecumenical officer for the Council of Bishops, addresses about 200 people rallied for environmental justice on the east lawn of the U.S. Capitol building.

A UMNS photo by Erik Alsgaard



Members of the delegation to Russia, above, included Marilyn Oden, wife of Bishop William B. Oden, Cheryl Gillespie, Emily Gillespie, James Gillespie, chair of the Louisiana Conference Russia Initiative, Bishop William W. Hutchinson, United Methodist Bishop of Russia Ruediger Minor, Rev. Olga Kotsuba, pastor of First UMC, Ekaterinburg, Rev. Bob Burgess, pastor at Broadmoor UMC, Baton Rouge, Amy Mercer, also of Broadmoor, Carol Civils, Janet Hyatt; kneeling: Dennis Hyatt, Volunteers in Mission Director Larry Norman. Among various activities, the group visited a men's prison and attended a worship service inside the facility. Many of the prison walls displayed Christian-themed murals painted by the inmates, top. Bishops Minor and Hutchinson lead worship at the new church.

Photos by Larry Norman

Ekaterinburg, *from page 1*

ment of so many dreams where before there were just hopes. The consecration marks the beginning of what this church can mean to the 1.2 million people living in Ekaterinburg and the surrounding region."

The delegation arrived on June 12 to help with final preparations for the Sunday service. The visitors from Louisiana washed and scrubbed floors, hung wall paper and helped with landscaping. Folding chairs, benches and lawn chairs were set up to supplement the church pews so that the nearly 500 participants could be seated at the consecration service.

Leading the consecration and worship service were Bishop Rudiger Minor of Russia, Bishop Hutchinson, District Superintendent Elena Stepanova of the Ekaterinburg region and pastor of First United Methodist, Ekaterinburg, Olga Kotsuba.

Dignitaries from the Russian government, church contractors, and representatives of several Protestant denominations established in the region attended the two and a half hour service. Emissaries from the Seventh Day Adventist, Pentecostal, Baptist and Lutheran churches presented vases, paintings and other gifts to the Ekaterinburg church as a sign of support and solidarity. Korean Methodists traveled eight hours by train from Moscow to attend the consecration.

"There is such a supportive ecumenical network in place; it is an amazing thing to see. On the church's one-year old anniversary, these churches will bring gifts again. The lay leaders of these churches explain that they want to present Protestantism as a unit, since the Russian Orthodox church is the only denomination recognized by the government," said Gillespie.

The congregation of nearly 800 per-

sons still suffers subtle pressures and persecutions for being United Methodists. Many resist placing their name on church roles for fear of losing jobs.

During their stay, the Louisiana delegation visited a local orphanage for special needs children. Many of the young residents suffer from birth defects attributed to a radioactive spill in the Ekaterinburg area, similar to the one experienced in Chernobyl. The children are developing their gifts in art, knitting and sewing. Creatively designed stuffed animals, made by the residents, line the walls of the orphanage.

The group also went to a men's prison and attended a worship service inside the facility. Three of the prisoners performed contemporary Russian Christian music during worship. Each man is taught a trade before finishing their sentence.

Many of the prison walls displayed Christian-themed murals painted by the inmates.

Volunteers in Mission teams are now being formed to travel to both the Ekaterinburg orphanage and the prison. Those working with the children will primarily offering teaching and assistance with their sewing, painting and other creative ministries.

VIM teams headed for the prison will help to build a second story on the Church of the Return, a United Methodist church located just outside the prison wall. The primary ministry of the 80-plus member congregation is working with the prisoners. Church of the Return is one of four Russian churches that receive financial support from the supportive church alliance with Louisiana conference churches.

"The United Methodist Church has a presence in Russia that will carry on for many years to come," said Gillespie.



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CONFERENCE MINISTRIES

VOL. 2, NO. 13

BATON ROUGE, LA

July 20, 2001

Igniting Ministry television spots to run in September

Igniting Ministry staff at United Methodist Communications have announced the placement of a national schedule of television spots set to run Sept. 4-30 during United Methodist "Open House Month." The buy includes commercials running on 15 cable networks and on CBS.

The 30-second spots chosen to rotate throughout the schedule include "Diversity" and two versions of "Rain." These spots may be viewed on the Igniting Ministry web site

(<http://www.ignitingministry.org>) or accessed on the sample video tape included in the Igniting Ministry Planning Kit.

The cable networks and programs selected for the airing of Igniting Ministry spots are published on the Igniting Ministry web site. Churches are encouraged to download a copy of the television schedule from the web site so that members might be familiarized with the choices made by UMC.

Igniting Ministry planning kits are in

high demand, and some churches have been informed that the kits are on back order with UMC.

If churches are waiting for their kit to arrive and need to access a kit to conduct training or to obtain advertising tools, they are encouraged to contact their District office to view the kit or share with another church in their district.

The number to call to order an Igniting Ministry Planning Kit is (877) 218-6535.

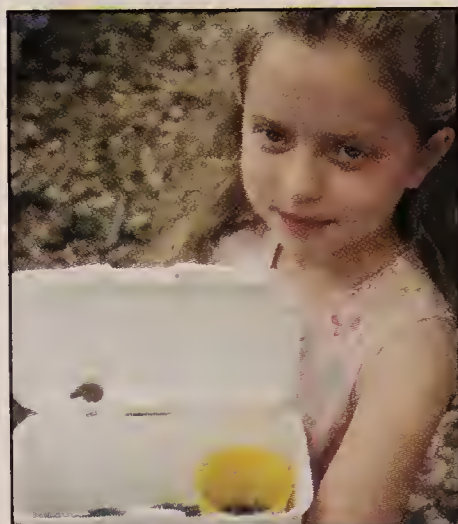
La. youth rank ninth in national YSF giving

Louisiana Conference youth ranked among the top 20 nationwide in their 2000 giving to Youth Service Fund in both per capita giving and gross dollar amount contributed.

La. Conference youth donated more than \$4,300 to the Youth Service Fund.

The top ten conferences, in order of rank, included South Carolina, Holston, Virginia, North Carolina, Illinois Great Rivers, California-Pacific, East Ohio, Western Pennsylvania, Louisiana and Nebraska.

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Photo by Charlie Gesell, Shreveport Times

Hazel Daniels, right, has been playing organ and piano at Lakeview United Methodist Church for more than 70 years. The congregation honored her contribution to the congregation by declaring "Hazel Daniels Day."

Lakeview UMC organist still strikes a chord after 70 years

BY ABE LEVY

For more than 70 years, Hazel Daniels has been the organ and piano player at Lakeview United Methodist Church. As such, she's gotten used to camouflaging herself and her music into the worship service so that others can enjoy.

But the church singled her out when it named "Hazel Daniels Day" to honor her lifetime of service to the congregation.

The church swapped old stories from longtime members and piano students of hers. It sang traditional songs

with "customized" lyrics just for Daniels. Most of all, the church gave the 85-year-old a well-deserved thank you.

"Pastors have come and gone, but Hazel has outlasted them all," said current pastor, Rev. Charles Humphreys. "She's been a steady influence on the church. We couldn't have gotten along without her music."

More than 14 pastors can say that. She joined the church at age three when the church itself was only 19 years old. Her family moved to Shreveport from the South Louisiana town of Milton near Lafayette. Her

father was a machinist for Southwestern Gas and Electric Company until his retirement at 65.

He and her mother raised her "decently," Daniels said, joining Lakeview when it was on Texas Avenue. The Daniels stayed as the church moved again to Park Avenue and then to its current location overlooking Cross Lake.

Her parents, whom she lived with until their deaths, did everything in the church, teaching Sunday school, serving on leadership boards and mission-

See Daniels, page 3

ON THE JOURNEY

Five Extinct Volcanoes

Albuquerque, New Mexico is a fascinating, old and beautiful city. It was founded more than 400 years ago when Spanish explorers entered the region in search of the fabled Seven Cities of Gold. It was named for Spain's Duke of Albuquerque (note the presence of the "r" before the first "q". That "r" has been removed in the present day spelling), thus giving it the nickname of "The Duke City". Today's city is nestled at the base of the Sandia (watermelon) Mountains, given their name by the watermelon colored hues the stone projects when illuminated by the afternoon sun. The eastern limit of the city runs up against federal lands and a national forest. It is bordered by Native American reservations on the north (Sandia) and south (Ysleta). The Rio Grande river runs through the center of the old city.

The only room for expansion the city now has is to the west. This western frontier is a large mesa, much of which is composed of lava flow from five extinct volcanoes. The five cone-like mounds rise ever so slightly into the western horizon and seem to serve as five sentinels looking on through the brilliant sunsets of this high desert region. They are not large, but they are very visible and significant.

As I was walking one morning just before we left Albuquerque to move to Louisiana, these five volcanoes caught my physical and my spiritual eye. Although I had seen them thousands of times, they took on a new mystery that morning. As I am want to do in such a situation I simply whispered, "Teach me a lesson God." This is what I discerned.

These volcanoes once were fed by hot, molten lava at their core. The lava churned and churned until the earth's crust could restrain it no more. In five different eruptions the uncontrollable molten rock rose up from the ground and flowed freely over the countryside forming a moving wall that could not be stopped. Once the inner fires had died down, the molten flow ceased and hardened into the escarpment that forms the west mesa today.

Sometime later, human beings, ancestors of the present day Native American tribes, began scratching their names and images in the hardened stone. They drew pictures (now known as pictographs) on the cold, black lava thereby telling generations to come their own unique stories.



Bishop William W. Hutchinson

"Are we alive and making our own marks for posterity? Or are we just looking at pictures in stone someone long ago carved for us?"

Hundreds of years later these walls of rock were declared sacred by descendants of the original artists and set aside as a park by the United States government where all could go to enjoy the scenes of the past and recall that fiery blast that once was consuming the earth. Now this sacred and geologically significant space simply stands as a reminder of yesterday's activity. Its own vibrant life is gone except as it is recalled in legend and geological history.

Does this story have anything to say to the church of today? Are the volcanoes on the west mesa in Albuquerque, New Mexico a physical and spiritual reminder to us? Do they say that we must not let the fire of God's spirit go out in our lives and that we dare not allow the molten river of God's love and grace to harden into stone so that it only holds the story of yesterday etched in pictures drawn by some ancient hand?

Oh that the church of today will be a veritable volcano, fueled from deep within by the fire of God's spirit! And may we as the living parts of that body virtually erupt with love and grace until the presence of God flows freely and warmly from us, covering the countryside as a blanket of God's presence.

I encourage you – no, I implore you – to think about this image. It has haunted me ever since I walked that morning and asked God for a lesson. I believe the lesson I heard applies to our church and I believe it applies to our individual journeys as well.

What do you think? How's the fire burning? Are we waxing hot or cold? Are we presently alive and making our own marks for posterity? Or are we just looking at pictures in stone someone long ago carved for us?

May there be a "river of love", hot and molten, life altering and transforming, flowing out of you and me and all we touch until all the world is consumed for God.

In Christ's love,

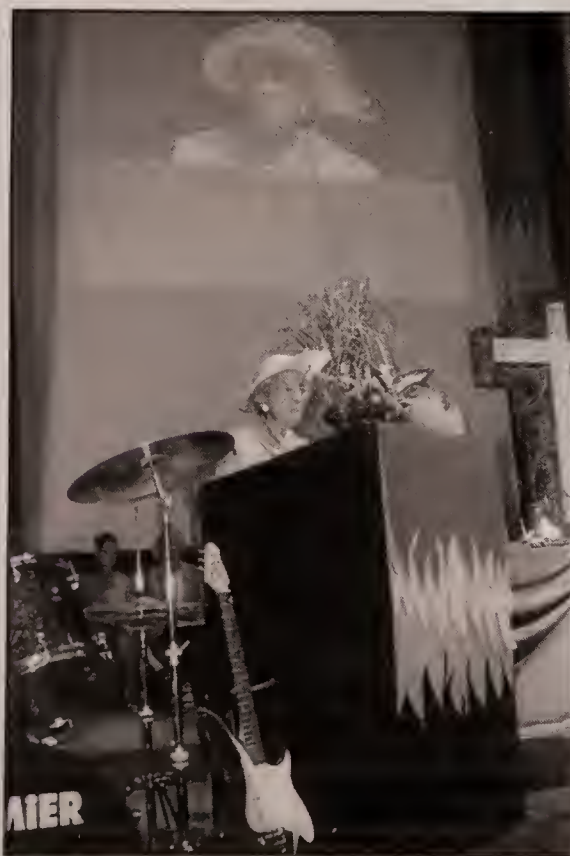
Bill Hutchinson

Snapshots of Annual Conference



Photos by Joshua Lewis

Lusinda Warren, left, received the Sojourner Truth Award from Rachel Scott, right, at the COSROW luncheon. Kay Hutchinson, center, served as guest speaker.



A fitting metaphor for the controlled chaos of Annual Conference, a gaggle of wires writhes out of the back of the soundboard run by Claiborne Sharp in the Gold Dome of Centenary College in Shreveport, above. Conference Lay Leader Dr. Anita Crump delivers one of her many presentations, left.

Pledges for Conference Center available

The Conference Center in Woodworth is attempting to complete the pledges made to furnish rooms in memory or in honor of loved ones.

"Four of the rooms have been released and will be available on a first

requested basis to underwrite. The pledge amount is \$3,000," said Nancy M. Carruth, memorial gifts chairperson.

Persons interested in pledging should contact Carruth at P. O. Box 267, Bunkie, LA, 71322.



Gordon Dickinson pauses during work with nurse Shanita Vance at the Lafon Home in New Orleans. Dickinson is the new administrator at the United Methodist-related institution.

Lafon Home hires new administrator

BY BETTY BACKSTROM
EDITOR

Lafon Home in New Orleans has a new face that is visible throughout its halls. Gordon Dickinson, new administrator for Lafon, is excited about his role with the African-American serving institution.

"My wife Aleta Declouet Dickinson is originally from New Orleans, so this is like coming home. I'm from Arkansas, and have spent the past three years traveling Mississippi and Texas for larger corporations," said Dickinson.

Aleta, an internist, has opened a clinic in Slidell. The couple has a three-year-old son Ian.

The new administrator is proud of the 134-year heritage of Lafon, which serves a unique mission. "Not many homes like Lafon have survived. This institution is self-standing and is not part of a larger organization," said Dickinson.

He plans to position the home so that it "survives another 134 years." Dickinson hopes to implement a building project which would double the size of the existing dining room and add an administrative wing. "In

addition to any expansion, we plan to totally renovate the inside of the building. We have qualified for HUD funding, and the city of New Orleans gave us grant dollars to accomplish the project. We are fortunate to have the support of the city's leaders. Mayor Morial grew up down the street from us on St. Bernard, and his mom was one of the organizers of Jazzy Night in June, an annual fundraiser," said Dickinson.

His ultimate goals include stepping up services by offering Medicare, not only Medicaid. This move will allow the home to provide additional services on-site. The institution is also investigating the negotiation of private party contracts with insurance companies, making the home available to all programs.

"Another unique feature of Lafon is the longevity of the staff. Many of the employees and neighborhood residents have a relative residing in the home. Walking down the street gives an atmosphere almost like a small town. All the stores and business people take great pride in the facility. We are all like extended family," Dickinson said.

Daniels, from page 1

any societies. At age 7, Daniels' mother decided she should be given music lessons. Ironically, a newspaper ad led her mother to the same music teacher she had as a child.

So twice a week, Daniels joined three other children her age for music lessons from a "slave master" of a teacher, she said. The teacher also gave her one-on-one lessons.

"I learned. Believe me, I learned," she said, leaning forward and raising her eyebrows. She had to practice before and after school—at least 30 minutes before being cleared to play outside with her neighborhood friends. Summer was her only break. But when school started, so did the lessons.

"I had a mother, father and grandmother all living at home, so there was no way to get out of practicing," Daniels said.

She played occasionally for musicals and other functions at her alma mater, Fair Park High School, where in 1931 she was part of its first graduating class. But she remembers most playing piano for informal sing-alongs with her high school friends.

Joyce Dudley, Lakeview's secretary from 1968 to 1993, can't confirm whether Daniels began as church organist when she was 11 or 16. Daniels doesn't remember either. Must have gotten lost in the hundreds of weddings, baptisms, children's programs and special songs she's played for through the years.

Last week, she read an announcement in the newspaper of a couple celebrating 60 years of marriage. She remembers playing for their wedding, and had them sign her "wedding song" book, which has dozens of signatures from couples for whom she's played.

"What would be chaos was when she would go on vacations," Dudley said. "Hazel knows when to play the doxology, and she's one of the best accompanists."

Up until 1967, the church didn't pay

her for playing. She made a living teaching piano and music out of a spare room at her house. After her mother died, she and her brother bought a brand-new Steinway upright piano and donated it to the church in her mother's memory.

Today, Daniels hasn't skipped a beat. Like always, she makes sure anyone singing special music practices with her beforehand. She can sight-read any music and has likely played most songs in the hymnal several times over.

"If she goofs, she thinks everybody heard it," Dudley said. "And nobody did. She wants it to be as good as it can be."

Still, she spends part of every Saturday at the church, practicing the hymns for the next day's service and paper-clipping the pages for easy reference. Perhaps most remarkable is how she's coped with being mostly deaf for the past 40 years. A hearing aid in one ear is the only way she can make out sounds.

She's also religious with her personal habits. Mondays are for washing clothes. Tuesdays for ironing and Fridays for cleaning the house. And every day is for practicing music.

She sends Valentine's and Christmas cards to people in the church who know her as much more than just the woman behind the organ.

On occasion, she's known to make faces or even stick her tongue out when something displeases her. A spunky, small-framed woman, she's also acquired a reputation of being a bit of a lead foot behind the wheel.

Rarely at a loss for words, she fumbled at the question of how she could play the piano and organ for so long and for the same church.

"I don't know whether I wanted to or not. It was something I just did. So many people don't know how, and I could do it."

Reprinted with permission from the Shreveport Times.

Harper Scholarship

Broadmoor United Methodist Church in Baton Rouge recently announced that Becky DeFoe is the recipient of the 2001 John Ed Harper Scholarship. The award was created to recognize the participation and service of a deserving youth and to honor the efforts of Rev. Harper in serving the youth of The United Methodist Church for more than 20 years. Harper and DeFoe are pictured at right.



CONFERENCE CALENDAR

July

20-22
24-25
26-29
26-31
28

Happening
World Methodist Council
Cursillo #85
World Methodist Conference
New Orleans District
Faith & Money Workshop

La. Conference Center
Brighton, England
La. Conference Center
Brighton, England

St. Luke's UMC

August

1-5
3
3-4
7
11

National Youth Ministry Organization
Companions in Christ Training
Lake Charles District
Faith & Money Workshop
Orientation for New Clergy
North Shore District
Faith & Money Workshop

Simpson College
Indianola, Iowa
La. Conference Center
TBA
Conference Office, Baton Rouge
St. Timothy UMC, Mandeville



Spring Retreat at the Northeast Campus Ministry

UL Monroe expands campus ministry

BY KELSEY GREEN

Northeast Campus Ministry (NCM), located on the campus of the University of Louisiana at Monroe, is growing in numbers for Christ! After finding out Bill Willis, the director for the past three years, would be moving, David Key became the campus director this past July.

The expanding ministry that NCM experienced this year has been wonderful. Our weekly events include worship on Mondays, lunch for a buck on Wednesdays, and a Bible study on Thursdays. These events have allowed the students an opportunity to increase their knowledge of Christ and to grow closer to other students through Christian fellowship.

Each semester, we have involved in a coffeehouse and retreat. The coffeehouse has been a great success and given students a time to have Christian fun on a Friday night. Our retreats have been spiri-

tually uplifting and helped us grow closer to one another. At a Christian concert this year, we adopted a young girl named Shewly from Bangladesh. Students are choosing a month to sponsor her through Mission of Mercy and it is a rewarding experience.

Other events that took place this year included: Welcome Week activities to invite new students, tailgating for the ULM Indians football team, providing Thanksgiving dinner for students left on campus over the holiday week, progressive Christmas dinner, providing Christmas gifts for a needy family, painting NCM, bringing the worship service for Lea Joyner UMC one Sunday morning, and helping at Memorial UMC. As you can tell, it has been a busy year at NCM. We are looking forward to many more years of ministry in bringing college students to a personal relationship with Christ.



Sevier UMC dedicates stained glass windows

BY JO KILLEN

Sevier Memorial United Methodist Church held a dedication service recently to acknowledge the installation of two stained glass windows placed in the narthex of the church.

One window is in memory of Dr. Kenneth K. Killen and depicts the "Healer." Kay Killen Taylor dedicated the window and Mr. Greg Williams, son-in-law of the former Dr. Killen, spoke of his long service to the health community of Ferriday.

The second window is in memory of Blanche Chauvin and depicts "Jesus in the Garden Gethsemane." Presentation of the window was by Charlotte White, her granddaughter. Larry Chauvin spoke of his mother's remarkable influence on family and friends.

Mary Arnold, president of the Board of Directors received the windows on behalf of the church.

Rev. Bob Bowland stands with Joline Killen, far left, and Charlotte White, left, before the windows each dedicated in honor of loved ones.

Twenty-one complete lay speaking course

BY ANNA HAM AND JANA SMITH

The Monroe District held the Lay Speaking Ministries Basic Course, Proclaiming the Gospel, in April at First United Methodist Church in West Monroe.

Twenty-one people from throughout the Monroe District completed the course, which is one of the largest groups in several years. The participants received specific training to develop skills in witnessing of their Christian faith through spoken communication, church and community leadership, and care-giving ministries.

The Monroe District will hold the Lay Speaking Ministry Advanced Course, Lead in Worship, October 27 at Rayville United Methodist Church.

We look forward to having a good response to help provide our pastors with lay speakers to fill their pulpits on occasion.

Send your church's stories to the District Missioner:

Jana Smith
909 N. 18th St., Suite 206
Monroe, LA 71201-5744
(318) 387-7364
janamissioner@cs.com



Among those attending the lay speaking course were Roslynn Pogue, Brenda Howell, Glenver Rowland, Anna Rife, Susan Beck and Jean Elliot.



North Shore responds to flooding with flood bucket distribution



Flood buckets were distributed throughout the North Shore District last month in the wake of Tropical Storm Allison. The La. National Guard assisted in the effort, left. First United Methodist Church in Denham Springs was one of the distribution points. Pastor Rev. Wybra Price and several members of the church display the clean up kits, above.

Aldersgate hosts annual men's retreat

Aldersgate United Methodist Men recently sponsored their third annual Men's Retreat. Thirteen men participated in the gathering.

Rev Fred Zobel, associate pastor, from First United Methodist Church in Pensacola, Fla. was the spiritual leader. His credentials include being retired Navy Chaplain (Captain) with a wife, three married daughters and six grandchildren. His topic: "What You Wanted to Know about Revelation But Were Afraid to Ask." We had an exciting time. Zobel brought many discussion-enriched topics that helped everyone grow spiritually.

Topics such as "Ethics," "Passion" and "Commitment" were studied. It was through his teachings that two new

members at Aldersgate promised to get more involved in the church.

In fact, one agreed to help prepare our breakfast for our monthly meetings, and both agreed to start being more involved in our local Men's Club. We also had an excellent music staff. Charles Shay, pianist from Baton Rouge, and our own Randy Smith on guitar guided us through several songs from both the hymnal and the Cursillo Song Book. Joe Kelley, President of the Louisiana Conference United Methodist Men, and Joseph Bosch, president of the North Shore District United Methodist Men, presented an overview of the mission of United Methodist Men at the local, district, state, and international levels.



Singer-songwriter shares talent with district

Have you been one of the people blessed to hear a performance by singer and songwriter Mike Morris recently? If not, you will likely receive this blessing soon.

Mike received the call to commit his talents to the service of God in the 'local' community some four years ago and since that time has been writing and recording songs that he has been sharing with people in churches, nursing homes, and special events throughout the area.

Because Mike does not see himself as an entertainer but rather as a minister of the Gospel, his goal is to share the Good News through scripturally-based "inspirational jazz" music with as many people as possible.

Mike, who is the son-in-law

of Rev. Dr. Larry Maddin (former Superintendent of the Lake Charles District), recently shared his gifts of word and voice at Annual Conference and at the Laity Banquets of both the Northshore and Lake Charles Districts. Anyone who attended these events can testify to Mike's talent and the blessing they received through his, "music for the Body of Christ."

Among other accomplishments Mike has toured in Europe, performed at the 2001 Religious Broadcaster's Convention, and has made various television appearances. Mike has recorded two CDs, "Look Up and Live," available through Rain Music, and "Goin' Jesus' Way," an independent release. Mike, his wife, Lynn, and their two children, Jay and Katie, live in Lacombe and are

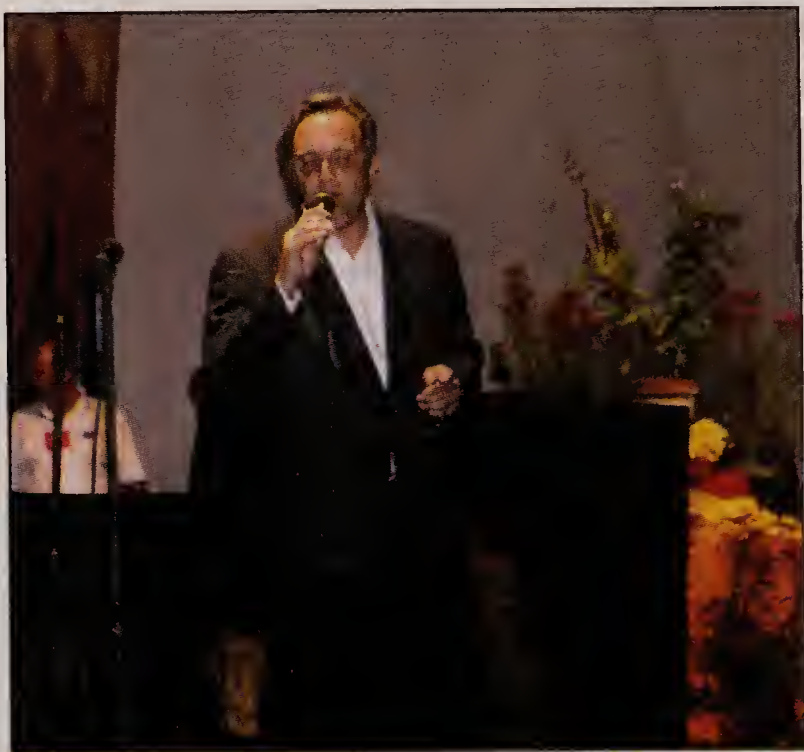
members of the UM Church of the Servant in Mandeville.

Mike feels that God has called him to offer his gifts to local churches, so don't miss the opportunity to have this world-class talent minister to your community.

If you would like Mike to share his gifts in worship or other function you can contact him by calling the UM Church of the Servant in Mandeville at (985) 624-8622.

Send your church's stories to the District Communication Advisor:

Rev. Brady Whitton
355 Asbury Dr.
Mandeville, LA 70471-3136
(504) 626-3307
bwhitton@sttimothyumc.org



Singer-songwriter Mike Morris performs recently at Annual Conference in Shreveport.

Igniting Ministry web site offers host of ideas for welcoming guests

The following is an excerpt from the "Welcoming and Hospitality Tips" booklet found on the Igniting Ministry web-site (<http://ignitingministry.org>), produced by United Methodist Communications. If your church has not ordered a kit and begun preparations for Open House Month and the Igniting Ministry campaign in September, call (877) 281-6535 to order materials.

Welcoming and Hospitality Tips

Congregational communication is not limited to verbal and printed messages. Churches exude a kind of "body language" that may either reinforce or contradict their other messages. Churches that proclaim, "All are welcome," but ignore visitors are, at the very least, guilty of false advertising!

Some of the most eloquent messages from your church are unspoken. The church building, the grounds, the sign, even the church van are viewed 24 hours a day. All of them send out silent signals—public-relations signals. Those in the 25-54 age range are known to especially take note of those silent signals.

As a key player on the communication team, you have a responsibility to



see that every element related to your church carries out its vision and mission in a positive way.

"You only have one chance to make a good first impression." This old saying might have been coined for church communicators.

Studies have shown that visitors make up their minds in the first 11 minutes whether or not they're coming back to a church. Those 11 minutes are the time usually spent finding a parking place, locating the proper entrance, being greeted, and finding a seat.

No matter how eloquent the sermon, the opinion of a visitor is often shaped by unspoken messages long before the service begins!

Your sign may be the initial identify-

ing element a potential visitor sees. Place your sign at right angles to the street in front of the building, visible to people driving in both directions. It should be seen easily from the far lane, with letters large enough to read from a moving car.

What's the condition of your sign? Is it kept free of weeds or shrubbery? Is it freshly painted? Is it lighted at night? Does it contain current information? A sign in poor repair, containing dated information, suggests neglect.

Use banners and lawn signs to advertise programs or convey messages, such as "Building Hope" or "Touching Lives," to go along with another advertising campaign. Change them frequently to show yours is a dynamic and active con-

gregation.

The grounds should reflect cleanliness, order and harmony. Good landscaping, neatly trimmed grass, and an absence of leaves and litter indicate a high level of pride. The condition of the driveway and parking lot is also important.

Both should be paved and free of potholes. Lines and directional arrows in the parking lot should be freshly painted. Parking spaces for visitors and disabled persons should be plentiful and clearly marked. If the church has several buildings, each should be clearly marked so a visitor will know which door to enter.

Make sure the church entrance is well-lighted and inviting. Wheelchair ramps should be covered with a nonskid material and protected by some kind of canopy.

Mark restrooms clearly, and place directional signs leading to the church office and the nursery in the foyer. The walls and ceiling should, at least, look freshly painted, and the floors should be vacuumed or polished and free from clutter.

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SMU to host children's ministry workshop

Registration is underway for the Perkins School of Children's Ministry workshop, "Nurturing the Christian Formation of Children," to be held Aug. 25 at the Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University.

The workshop is designed for adults who work with children in the church, including Christian educators, Sunday School teachers, children's program leaders and pastors.

Rev. Leanne Hadley will give the keynote address on the spirituality of children. Hadley is an author, ordained United Methodist elder and founder of "First Steps Spirituality Center" in Colorado Springs, Co.

The workshop costs \$60 per person or \$50 for two or more people from the same church. The cost includes lunch.

Participants will be able to attend three sessions from a wide selection of topics, including "Nuts and Bolts of Being a Sunday School Teacher" and "Teacher as Spiritual Guide." For more information, call (214) 768-2153.

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E-mail: lanow@bellsouth.net

—New Address—

On the Web

You can find the Louisiana Annual
Conference on the Internet at
<http://www.la-umc.org>

FULL-TIME YOUTH DIRECTOR

Immediate opening at Noel United Methodist Church in Shreveport. Bachelor's degree, organizational skills, spiritual depth/maturity and United Methodist background preferred. Send resume with references to Youth Director Search Committee, 520 Herndon Street, Shreveport, LA, 71101 by July 27, 2001.

FULL-TIME YOUTH DIRECTOR/MINISTER

Broadmoor United Methodist Church in Baton Rouge is a 4,600-member suburban church with 80+ active youth in grades 7-12. Bachelor's degree, 3 years previous experience, organizational skills, spiritual depth/maturity and UM background preferred. Send resume and references to Emily Freeman, 3934 Deerfield Lane, Baton Rouge, LA, 70816 by July 31. For additional information, call (225) 924-6269.

The other side of Russia

While Louisiana United Methodists continue their mission in Ekaterinburg, the Alaska Missionary Conference ministers to the poor of eastern Siberia.

BY TIM TANTON

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (UMNS) – You won't find any United Methodist churches in Russia's impoverished Chukotka region, but the connection is doing some of its most vital work there, helping people for whom survival has become a daily struggle.

The spirit of that work lives in the small frame of Della Waghiyi, a Yupik native woman and United Methodist who is regarded with something close to amazement by those who know her. Her realization in 1998 that people across the Bering Strait were starving sparked a growing outreach effort.

A visit with exchange students from Chukotka opened Waghiyi's eyes. As the students' stay in Alaska drew to a close, many of them didn't want to return home. One girl told of Chukotka children fainting in school from lack of nourishment. Conditions had become so desperate that people were eating their dogs. Waghiyi was moved.

"My heart goes for them, especially the children," Waghiyi said. "I made a plate for myself and couldn't eat. I just think about those children. And I prayed and wept for those children."

She contacted the Rev. James Campbell, a United Methodist pastor, who was planning a humanitarian relief effort through the Chukotka Native Christian Ministry in Anchorage. Since the early 1990s, the organization – supported through the United Methodist Church's Advance program and by other denominations – had been sponsoring missionary visits and providing aid in the form of outboard motors, medicine and other resources. Campbell saw the need for a larger humanitarian relief effort taking shape, like a gathering storm.

"In March, when Della called, that was like the lightning strike," said Campbell, currently pastor of First United Methodist Church of Anchorage. The humanitarian relief effort took off, and it gained momentum the following year with the formation of the Russian Far East Task Force of the United Methodist and Moravian Churches.

A group of Russian relief leaders who work with the task force recently journeyed across the Bering Strait to thank the United Methodists and Moravians and to tell their stories. Their visit became a focal point of the May 25-27 meeting of the United Methodist Church's Alaska Missionary Conference.

The story of how United Methodists and Moravians, native Yupik people and non-native alike, joined hands in outreach efforts illustrates the power of being connected – not only through the Wesleyan connection but through families, tribes and faith.

Crisis sets in

Chukotka lies in Russia's Far East, or Siberia, separated from Alaska by only the Bering Strait. It is closer to Alaska than any U.S. annual conference, and many of the people share family ties through the native Yupik communities that live on both sides of the strait.

The Soviet Union's collapse in the early 1990s left Chukotka's economy in shambles, forcing thousands of people to move elsewhere and leaving the remainder to scrape out a living in harsh conditions. The jobs that had been created largely by the government were gone, and many basic necessities – food, clothes, fuel – became unaffordable or scarce.

For thousands of years, the Yupik people of Alaska and Siberia had been traveling back and forth, joined by a common language, culture, trade and ancestry. That exchange became frozen by the Cold War.

With the end of the Soviet era, Waghiyi's late husband, the Rev. John Waghiyi Sr., and other Yupik missionaries from Alaska's St. Lawrence Islands began traveling to Chukotka, renewing centuries-old bonds and sharing the Gospel. The region was still relatively stable. The work of John Waghiyi, who died in 1993, and the other St. Lawrence Island Yupiks opened the way for the relief efforts that eventually followed.

When the humanitarian crisis was apparent, Della Waghiyi became a powerful voice for the people of Chukotka, raising money and rallying support around the United States for the outreach work. "She's the spirit of it," Campbell said. "People are drawn to the wonder of this woman. When she speaks, it is with such depth and earnestness and understanding of the situation. ... She is the embodiment of the spirit of the work

we are doing."

Waghiyi, a commissioned missionary who has been to Chukotka five times, said living conditions there reminded her of the difficult times of the 1930s and '40s. The circumstances of the people had gone from bad to worse, as they lost heat and electricity.

Tim Tanton's coverage of mission to eastern Russia will continue in the next issue of LouisianaNow!



A UMNS photo by Tim Tanton

Dmitri Nouteneout, 23, performs a traditional dance of the Chukchi, a native people in Russia's Chukotka region. As he dances, Olyt Tevlianaout, 13, sings and accompanies him on a percussion instrument. They performed during a celebration held by the Alaska Missionary Conference at the Alaska Native Heritage Center in Anchorage.



A UMNS photo

Rev. Clyde Anderson (center), a Board of Global Ministries executive, greets a displaced family in their makeshift living quarters at a center in Changa Changa, Congo, in this file photo.

Bishop offers thanks, highlights shortfall in Hope for Children of Africa campaign

Editor's Note: The following is excerpted from a letter by Bishop Elias Galvan, chair of the Hope for the Children of Africa task force.

Greetings to you in the name of Christ. I write this letter on behalf of the Council of Bishops' Task Force, Hope for the Children of Africa, but most importantly on behalf of the children of Africa, to express our profound thanks for your generous participation in the Bishop's Appeal.

Because of your generosity and the great response of our entire church, two school/homes for children are now being built in every Episcopal Area in Africa. We rejoice that boys and girls that were left orphaned or were victimized by the civil wars can experience God's love in a new way as they receive the proper

care and adequate training.

We praise God for your support and the response of the entire church.

But the goals of the appeal have not been reached. Only 5.5 million of the projected 12 million have been received.

In spite of the many and devastating civil wars and the suffering that they have created among the people, there is a great revival taking place in our African churches.

The Spirit of God is moving in new and powerful ways among our brothers and sisters. . . in Africa.

We commend you for your generous participation and encourage you to continue to support the goals of the Bishop's Appeal: Hope for the Children of Africa.



Thirty-one high schoolers from eight districts attended the inaugural Youth Leadership Conference at Centenary College in Shreveport.

Centenary College sponsors Youth Leadership Conference

United Methodist youth from throughout the state attended the United Methodist Youth Leadership Conference (UMYLC) held on the campus of Centenary College.

Thirty-one high school sophomores and juniors from eight districts attended the inaugural conference, which was designed to enhance the participants' leadership skills while introducing them to Centenary, a United Methodist-affiliated liberal arts college.

The participants stayed in the residence dorms with student hosts. Student leaders also acted as workshop co-leaders. During the course of the weekend, the youth participated in workshops on personality types, goal setting, motivation, and plan-

ning, organizing and promoting activities. They also took a spiritual inventory assessing their own spiritual gifts and learned about being effective spiritual and transformational leaders. The highlight of the weekend for many of the participants was the service project on Saturday afternoon.

The youth worked alongside members of Johnson Chapel United Methodist Church cleaning, scraping and painting one of the church buildings. As one of the participants commented, "Seeing the peoples' faces when we showed up to help brought me tons of joy."

Centenary graduates Ron and Celia Whitler led the participants in fun games and song. They also assist-

ed the youth in planning, organizing and leading the Sunday morning worship service. Celia, a professional singer and songwriter, gave a public concert on Saturday night in the open-air band shell. UMYLC participants sang, danced and mingled with concert attendees from the Centenary community and local United Methodist churches.

The leadership conference was sponsored in part by a grant from the United Methodist Youth Service Fund. Judging from the interactions of the youth and their positive comments, the first UMYLC was a great success. Plans are under way at Centenary College to offer another UMYLC in the fall, with the goal of offering two conferences each year.

Blessing of the animals

Approximately 175 members of First United Methodist Church in Baton Rouge celebrated God's love for all of creation by bringing their pets to be blessed in a special service. Pastor Chris Andrews asks God's blessing even for the serpent, right. Bobby Potts brought her dog to the ceremony, bottom right, and Sarah Heigle shows off her snails. The service coincided with Baton Rouge's Earth Day celebration.



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LOUISIANA

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VOL. 2, NO. 14

BATON ROUGE, LA

August 3, 2001

'Don't panic': latecomers guide to Igniting Ministry

The scenario: While at a district meeting you discover something called "Open House Month" that's part of another something called Igniting Ministry.

Don't panic. Here's a latecomer's survival guide:

Read about Igniting Ministry (www.ignitingministry.org/overview/). Send a letter to those who attend your church explaining Igniting Ministry, or

use the church newsletter to get out the message. Help everyone to understand that personally inviting others to church and welcoming those who attend are central to Igniting Ministry.

Obtain a free Campaign Overview Video from Igniting Ministry by visiting the website. Many of the District Missioners have copies of the video that can be borrowed. Show the video at a

gathering of all church members. If you do not have an Igniting Ministry Planning Kit, borrow one from your District Missioner or a nearby church and work through the appendices.

If possible, follow some of the role-playing exercises in the Igniting Ministry handbook to get the congregation "warmed up."

See Igniting Ministry, page 2

DON'T FORGET!

Companions In Christ Training

August 3
Conference Center,
Woodworth
Leader: Rev. Carole
Cotton-Winn
Call (985) 639-9531

INSIDE

On the Journey /2

Special Insert:
Conference Youth /3



Lafon Home celebrates
'A Jazzy Night' /12

□ New Orleans
District /12



Photo by Steve Franz, LSU Sports Information

Former All-American short stop for LSU, Stephanie Hastings just wrapped up her last season with the team as it competed in the Women's College World Series. Hastings places a strong emphasis on the role faith can play in athletics.

Methodist athlete shines in church and on the field

BY BETTY BACKSTROM
EDITOR

Stephanie Hastings, former All-American shortstop for LSU's softball team, faces everything in life with determination.

From her T-ball years in Hawaii to the glory days of playing in the Women's College World Series, Hastings has shown a lot of "grit" in striving to meet her athletic goals.

That strength of mind spills into every aspect of Stephanie's life, especially her daily walk in the Christian faith.

"I came to LSU not really knowing about God. I had attended a United Methodist church off and on during my childhood, but so many times sports kind of got in the way on weekends," said Hastings as she spoke at a recent contemporary worship service at Jefferson United Methodist Church in Baton Rouge.

"When I joined the softball team, I got involved in a fledgling Bible study that was started by one of the players, Shante Freeman. Shante took a lot of kidding and criticism for her faith, but

that study began to grow a little bit each year. Now, the majority of the team attends the weekly study," she added.

The meetings vary in content from week to week. Sometimes the study is more structured. Often, the gathering is an opportunity to "chill" and "appreciate God." Occasionally the team members have an "open mike" night, where the players take turns sharing thoughts, concerns and joys.

Hastings, who is now a full member

See Hastings, page 2

ON THE JOURNEY

A Bittersweet Morning

Today is a bittersweet kind of day. I woke up this morning (the first cause for celebration!) and had a great walk through our neighborhood. The myrtle trees are glorious, the flowerbeds sport brilliant colors, and the oak trees just keep extending their graceful arms further and further over the street. It was relatively cool. It was peaceful. A slight breeze moved the humid air and the birds were having as good a morning as I was. Truly morning had broken and it was an occasion for "praise with elation."

At the same time I was thinking about my youngest son who is to undergo surgery today as an outpatient in Reno, Nevada. It isn't a life threatening surgery, but it is serious enough

that he will be anesthetized and will have a period of recovery at home. While I know God's care is in Reno as much as it is in Baton Rouge, I also know my presence is not the same in Baton Rouge as it would be if I were in Reno. I trust all will be well and that recovery will be complete and his regular routine soon will be restored. But it isn't the same as being present, seeing his face, hearing his voice, seeing him open his eyes and know for my own self that he is alright. I just have to trust God that all will be well!

As I think about my separation from my son in his modest time of need, and think of my own sense of uneasiness about not being there with him and his family, my thoughts go to God's separation from us as sons and daughters and God's undoubted concern for our well being. I can only imagine what anxiety God's self-imposed restraint as it applies to us and our freedom of being has caused God. I am convinced beyond any doubt that God did not just put us on this planet, impose self-restriction from controlling our lives, and then go off nonchalantly and without concern to wait and see what happened.

No! God created us and placed God's own Spirit at work within us making our spirits restless until we find our rest in God. Only THEN, after creating us ultimately dependent on God for our salvation and peace did God step away from micro-control of our lives. But while we are in that restless and searching state for whom we are and to whom we belong, God must have some very anxious moments. God does not force us to accept our place as a son or daughter. God waits



Bishop William W. Hutchinson

"God would like to see us open our eyes of faith and look on Eternity's face and say, 'I am alright. Your Spirit has found my spirit. I am home again.'"

alright. Your Spirit has found my spirit. I am home again." I just know God would draw a huge sigh of relief at that point and be thrilled beyond expression that another child had come home and the distance that existed before had been erased.

Self-imposed restraint from directing our lives must be hard on God as God watches from a distance, longing for us to respond to that Spirit and grace at work within us. If it is hard for me to be in Baton Rouge while my son has surgery in Reno, I can only imagine how God must agonize over those of us who are an eternity away and with whom God does not have close contact!

If you are reading this and have any sense of question about whether God is wondering about you or not, please stop now and "call home." If you know someone who has kept God's Spirit anxiously awaiting a contact, why not take this opportunity to speak to them about the fullness of grace and the answer to that yearning sense of restlessness that is within them. Now is a good time for you to make a witness to the longing and waiting heart of God.

You see why it has been a bittersweet morning? And yet, it is truly a sweet morning. Anything that causes us to pause on our journey and contemplate God and our relationship to God is truly a sweet blessing. May you have a beautiful blessing of your own today!

In Christ's love,

Bill Hutchinson

patiently at the end of our road, waiting for us to "come to ourselves" and return home, but never forcing the issue. God's Spirit just keeps working in our spirit keeping us restless within and always searching.

At the risk of making God anthropomorphic (like humans), I can just imagine that God would like very much to be in close communion with us and would like to have daily conversations with us. God would like to see us open our eyes of faith and look on Eternity's face and say, "I am



Photo by Steve Franz, LSU Sports Information

Stephanie Hastings shows her spirit for LSU's bid in this year's Women's College World Series.

Hastings, from page 1

of Jefferson UMC, remembers when teammate Brandy Landry and her parents Corky and Brenda Landry invited her to attend worship services. "Brandy is a very sincere, caring person. She went out of her way to invite me to Jefferson. That invitation was very important because it is the reason why I went that Sunday. She helped me to see that it is every Christian's job to invite others to church and to a relationship with Christ," said Hastings.

Stephanie, who graduates from LSU this December with a degree in kinesiology, is passionate about sharing her faith, especially with young people. "I especially enjoy speaking to Fellowship of Christian Athletes groups in the area high schools. So often teenagers are looking for something more, and they just don't realize that God is waiting for them, with arms wide open. One evening, I heard a guy who had lived in a ghetto talk about how he felt it was his responsibility to help others because someone had taken the time to save him," said Hastings.

Stephanie's voice trembled slightly when she spoke about her sister Kristin's role in her life. "When I came to LSU, I did not know that Kristin had been praying for me for two years to accept Christ. When that happened, Kristin and I began to pray for my parents and my brother Matt to do the same. My entire family is now completely committed to Christ and to serving Him," she said.

Hastings' family lives in Loganville, Ga., close to Stone Mountain, where they are actively involved in a local United Methodist church.

Although her college softball career is ending, Stephanie looks forward to graduation and the future. "I've always wanted to coach. I can see myself being very happy in that role."

In regard to her developing faith life, Stephanie has this to say: "God was on my side long before I really knew it or had a relationship with Him. I would say to any young person, 'Don't give up on God because He never gives up on you. He will always stick by you.'"

Igniting Ministry, from page 1

The most important plans your church can make are not related to placing advertising, but working to adopt a lifestyle of inviting, welcoming and discipling.

If you don't have enough time to plan something for Open House Month, remember, the emphasis is not on an event. The first step is welcoming. Spend the most time specifically demonstrating how to welcome people using resources available in the kit.

Don't assign a group of people the job of welcoming newcomers. Visitors spot that a mile away! Rather, assign the whole church the Christ-like task of welcoming everyone, especially those sitting within 10 feet around them during the three minutes before and after the

service. Did you know most newcomers leave within three minutes after the closing benediction?

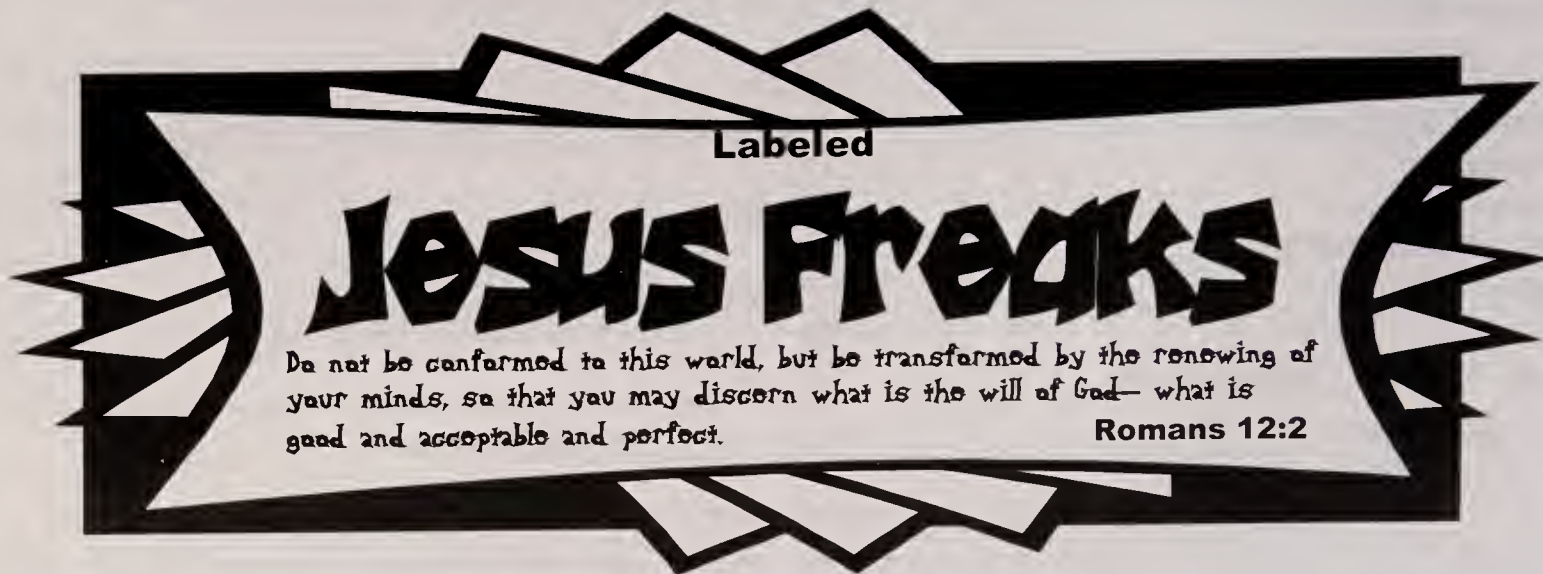
Invite people to the party! Television ads alone will not produce a strong church. Invite friends, relatives, associates and neighbors to your church. It's called the F. R. A. N. Because the TV ads "till the soil" for you, inviting persons to church won't seem so awkward.

To achieve increased membership requires more than one month of commercials.

Advertising, coupled with your invitational efforts, produces results only with time. Some churches will experience results more than other. Be in this effort for a lifetime, not just for a month.

FALL CONVOCATION

A Celebration of Fun, Fellowship, and Worship



SEPTEMBER 29TH, 2001
10:00 A.M. UNTIL 3:00 P.M.

Youth in grades 7th - 12th and Adult Workers with Youth are invited to
come to The Louisiana Conference Center,
A Center for Spiritual Renewal in Woodworth.
(318-449-4500)

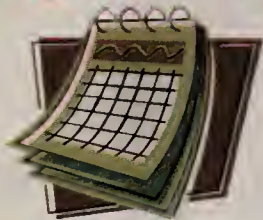
Registration Fee: \$ 20.00 per person
(cost includes lunch, T-shirt, YSF donation and programming.)
YSF ITEMS will be available for purchase

REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS SEPTEMBER 14, 2001

Come prepared for Music, YSF Monopoly & Recognition, Drawings
& Fantastic Preaching!

YOUTH DIRECTORS: THE INSERT OFFERS A SIMPLE AND INFORMATIVE WAY TO DECORATE YOUR BULLETIN BOARDS!
THESE FORMS MAY ALSO BE FOUND ON THE WEB AT: www.la-umc.org/youth.htm

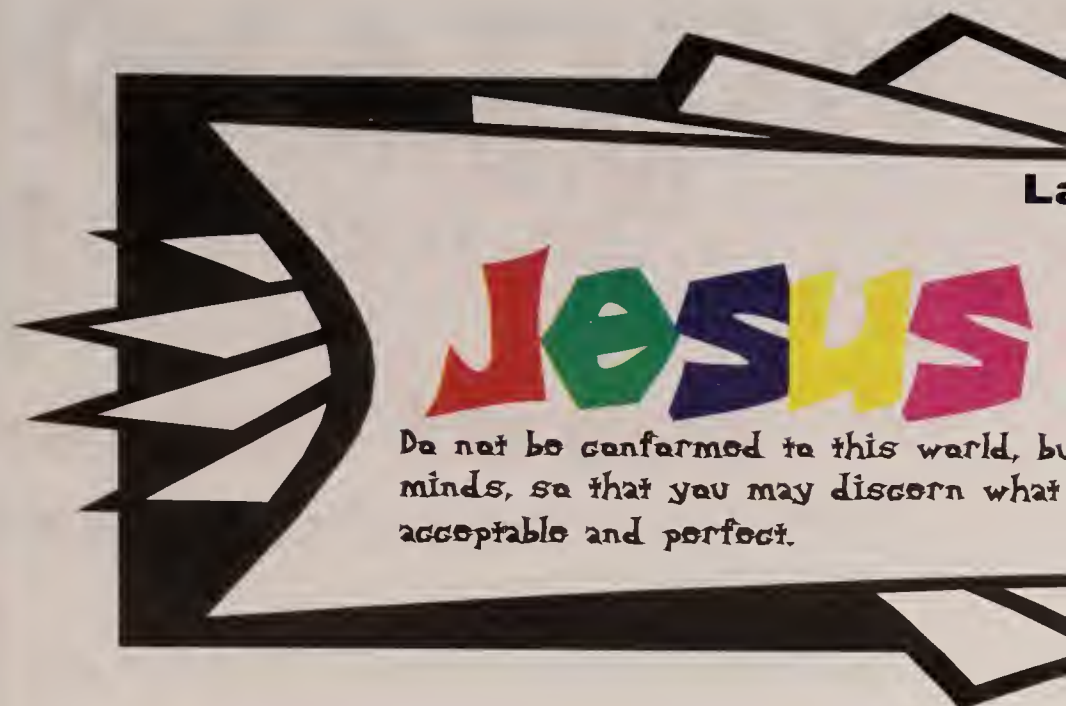
Mark Your Calendar



Youth and Youth Workers Calendar of Events

Louisiana Conference Web Page: <http://www.la-umc.org>

<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>
Perkins School of Youth Ministry - (Adult workers with youth) - Dallas, Texas	January 7-11	January 13-17
Happening (10 th -12 th grades & adults) – Conference Center	January 11-13	January 17-19
CCYM Meeting	January 18-19	January 24-25
Connection 2002: UM National Conference for Youth Workers (Formerly FORUM) (Every other year)	Panama City, Florida	
Sr. High Retreat (9 th -12 th grades & adults) – Conference Center	January 23-27	
	February 22-24 #1	February 7-9 #1
	March 1-3 #2	February 14-16 #2
Discerning the Call – Conference Center	February 15-16	
VIM Takin' It To the Streets	March	
Camping Sunday	March 24	
Centenary Youth Leadership Conference	April 12-14	
Confirmation Day with Bishop William Hutchinson – Conference Center	April 13	
General Conference (Every four years)	Coming in May 2004	
YSF Sunday	May 5	May 4
Annual Conference	June 2-5	June
DCYM Training (District Teams) – Conference Center	June 7-8	June 6-7
VIM Youth – Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference	June	June
UM Army	June, July	June, July
JYMO (CCYM members) – Mt. Sequoyah, Fayetteville, Arkansas	July 8-12	July 7-11
South Central Jurisdictional Conference (Every four years)	Coming in July 2004	
VIM Youth – Christian Alliance/Medical Bridges	July	July
Happening (10 th -12 th grades & adults) – Conference Center	July 19-21	July 18-20
Youth '03 – University of Tennessee Campus, Knoxville, Tennessee		July 23-27
VIM Youth – Rio Bravo, Mexico	July	July
UMYO (Formerly NYMO) (CCYM youth & adult representative) (Every other year)		August
August 1-5 Simpson College, Indianola, IA		
ICYCE (International Youth 18-30 year olds) (Every four years)	August, 2002	
CCYM Meeting	August 17	August 16
August 18		
Adult Youth Workers Conference Center	August 23-24	August 22-23
August 24-25		
Fall Convocation (Youth & Adults)	September 21	September 27
September 29		
JR. High Retreat (7 th & 8 th grades & adults) – Conference Center	October 25-27 #1	October 31-November 2 #1
November 9-11 #1	November 1-3 #2	November 7-9 #2
November 30-December 2 #2		
Washington,D.C.-New York Seminar (10 th grade – Sophomore College & Adults) Every other year	November 23-30	



JUNIOR HIGH RETREAT

Held at the Louisiana Conference Center,
A Center for Spiritual Renewal in Woodworth

(1-318-449-4500)

Presenting: **"Communicating With God and Others"**

Event Fee: **\$ 65.00 Per Person**

November 9th – 11th, 2001 #1

Beginning Friday, November 9th, at 8 p.m. — Ending Sunday, November 11th, at 11:30 a.m.

or

November 30th – December 2nd, 2001 #2

Beginning Friday, November 30th, at 8 p.m. — Ending Sunday, December 2nd, at 11:30 a.m.

Registration Deadline: **#1 – October 26th, 2001**

Limited space for each retreat.

Registration (INCLUDES APPLICATION & PAYMENT) will be accepted on a first come basis, so be sure to register early.

Who is eligible? Any youth in grades 7th – 8th and Adult Workers with Youth. There should be one adult counselor for every ten youth participants.

What to bring? Bible, money for YSF, musical instruments, talents, and your personal toiletry items. (Linens, towels, etc. will be provided by the Conference Center.)



No matter what the age—everybody has a great time at retreats!

SENIOR HIGH RETREAT

Held at the Louisiana Conference Center,
A Center for Spiritual Renewal in Woodworth
(1-318-449-4500)

February 22nd – 24th, 2002 #1

Beginning Friday, February 22nd, at 8 p.m. — Ending Sunday, February 24th, at 11:30 a.m.

or

March 1st – 3rd, 2002 #2

Beginning Friday, March 1st, at 8 p.m. — Ending Sunday, March 3rd, at 11:30 a.m.

Facilitators: **Rev. Jack O'dell**
& **Rev. Bernadine Johnson**

Presenting: "Relationships"

Event Fee: **\$ 65.00 per person**

Registration Deadline: February 8th, 2001 #1

Limited space for each retreat.

Registration (INCLUDES APPLICATION & PAYMENT) will be accepted on a first come basis, so be sure to register early.

Who is eligible? Any youth in grades 9th – 12th and Adult Workers with Youth. There should be one adult counselor for every ten youth participants.

What to bring? Bible, money for YSF, musical instruments, talents, and your personal toiletry items. (Linens, towels, etc. will be provided by the Conference Center.)

RETREAT REGISTRATION

Registration form and fee of \$ 65.00 must be received two weeks before the event.

Make checks payable to Louisiana Annual Conference or fill out credit card information below and mail with registration and \$ 65.00 fee for each youth and adult attending to:

**Louisiana Annual Conference
Attn: Youth Director
527 North Blvd.
Baton Rouge, LA 70802-5720
(225) 346-1646**

Choose one:

q	Jr. High Retreat #1	Nov. 9-11, 2001
q	Jr. High Retreat #2	Nov. 30-Dec. 2, 2001
q	Sr. High Retreat #1	Feb. 22-24, 2002
q	Sr. High Retreat #2	Mar. 1-3, 2002

PLEASE PRINT ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard # _____

Credit Card Amount \$ _____ Name on Card _____ Expiration Date _____

Check Amount: \$ _____ Check #: _____

Name _____ ☐ Youth ☐ Adult ☐ Male ☐ Female

Address	Grade
---------	-------

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone () _____ Person to Notify _____

E-mail _____

(Church Name)

(District)

In the event of an emergency where medical treatment is require, I give my permission to the church staff or sponsor to obtain the services of a licensed physician. Please attempt to notify me immediately concerning any such emergency.

Signed _____ Date _____
(Parent or legal Guardian)

Insurance Policy Number and Company _____

Comments, allergies

OUR COVENANT FOR CCYM EVENTS

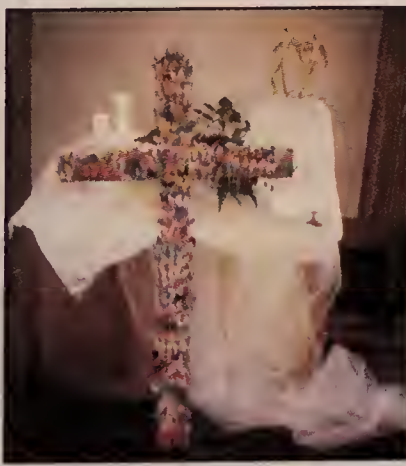
As we come together for this Conference event, let's join together, with these guidelines:

1. Everyone, youth and adult, are expected to attend all small & large group sessions, and worship experiences. Only by participating in the entire event can we benefit fully from the experience.
 2. We are guests of this facility for this period of time together. Let's treat the building, the equipment and the property with respect.
 3. Let's care for ourselves, including taking time to sleep. There is a designated time for lights out and quiet.
 4. There are many places to meet and relate during the event. As we respect the private rights of others, residence rooms are off limits to the opposite gender.
 5. Simply stated the possession or use of drugs, tobacco, alcohol, fireworks or firearms is not allowed. Their use or possession will result in an early trip home at your expense. If prescription drugs are to be taken during the event, you must inform the director of the event prior to the event or no later than registration.
 6. Above all, let's respect one another. That calls for cooperation and confidentiality among ourselves as we participate in sensitive issues in small or large group sessions.
 7. Adult counselors have the primary responsibility for the behavior of their local group but are also asked to serve as a counselor for the entire group.
- None of these are intended to be stifling. They are, intended to state clearly our expectations for the Christian Community and to enable us to live together in harmony. And remember: The more we put into the event, the more we will get out of it.

I have read and fully understand the Covenant for CCYM Events stated on this form. I agree to abide by these to the absolute best of my ability.

(Participants Signature)

(Pastor or Youth Director/Coordinator)



LOUISIANA UNITED METHODIST HAPPENING**APPLICATION**

Yes, I want to initiate/renew a personal relationship with Christ and attend a Happening Weekend. Please enter my application and notify me when I can plan on attending. I am in the 10th - 12th Grade or am an adult involved in youth ministry. It would be most convenient for me to attend?

Winter Session

(January)

Louisiana Methodist Conference Center
Woodworth, LA**Summer Session**

(July)

Louisiana Methodist Conference Center
Woodworth, LA

The cost for the Weekend is \$75.00, which includes 5 Meals & 2 Nights of Lodging. Scholarships are available. Please make check payable to: LA UNITED METHODIST HAPPENING.

(Please Print Clearly)

Name: _____ Name for Nametag _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone (____) _____ Email Address _____

Yr. of Graduation: _____ Sex M _____ F _____ Birth Date: ____/____/____ Special Diet _____

Talents, _____
Activities _____

Church you attend: _____ Pastor's Name: _____

Signature of your Pastor: _____

Your Signature _____

Permission to attend and Medical Release:

I hereby give my permission for the above-signed applicant to attend a Louisiana Happening Retreat and, in the event of any emergency, authorize the retreat leaders to seek medical attention for: _____.

I certify that I am the parent/legal guardian of the above named individual and authorize for emergency medical attention to be given. You may contact me for further information at:

Home (____) _____ Office (____) _____

My Insurance Carrier is: _____ Policy # _____

(Note: for specific Insurance Company Instructions, please attach a copy.)

Parent signature _____

RETURN FORM WITH \$20.00 NON-REFUNDABLE REGISTRATION FEE TO:

Larry Bates, Registrar LA United Methodist Happening
1312 W. Esplanade Apt. H
Kenner, LA 70065
Phone (504) 467-4786 E-Mail: MLBDDS1@aol.com

*The \$20.00 does not guarantee placement at the next Happening, but to one upcoming.

**FORMAT...**

Registrants arrive at 7:00 pm on Friday. After dorm assignments and introductions, the weekend theme begins to develop through a series of talks which compare the changing nature of material & social reality as compared to the permanent nature of spiritual reality, a firm foundation on which teens can build a secure foundation on life. Included in the schedule are small group discussions on each talk. Each day begins & ends in Worship, singing, games, and fun. The closing service at 3:30 on Sunday is open to family, friends, and Church members. The Happening ends at 5:30 PM on Sunday. Participants are not asked to do anything embarrassing. They will meet some neat friends who face the same problems in school, family, dating, & everyday life. They will find some answers this weekend.

STAFF...

The Happening is staffed & put on by teenagers for teenagers 10th - 12th grades. The few adults present will be there to support the weekend. There will be Spiritual Directors to administer the sacraments and provide spiritual counseling. The Happening is fun and you will meet some neat people.

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For more information contact:

Larry Bates, Registrar
LA United Methodist Happening
1312 W. Esplanade Apt. H
Kenner, LA 70065
Phone: (504) 467-4786 Home
(504) 619-8524 Office
Email: MLBDDS1@aol.com

Louisiana Conference YOUTH SERVICE FUND Project Application Form

Name of Project _____

Contact person administratively responsible for the project:

Name _____

United Methodist Church _____

Address _____

Street, Box, or Route

City

State

Zip

Phone () _____ E-Mail _____

Location of Project _____

Length of time project has been in operation _____

What has been your church's YSF giving in the past two years: _____

What money are you requesting from your conference YSF? _____

Please fill out the following on a separate sheet(s) of paper, not using more than one-half sheet for each question. You may append extra material (pictures, printed materials, etc.) However, the following information must be filled out independently and must be complete in and of itself. Be sure to include this sheet when submitting an application.

1. Justify the project:

- A. What need is it meeting?
- B. Who is it designed to help and how many persons will it affect?
- C. Is any other group or agency dealing with that need? Explain
- D. Why is this project the most appropriate way to meet that need?

2. Outline the project:

- A. Goals
- B. Resources
- C. Procedures
- D. Criteria for evaluation

3. Outline finances for the project:

- A. Total needs by categories: Administrative, Services and Supplies
- B. Other sources or funds
- C. Request for YSF money



Upon receiving a Youth Service Fund grant from the Louisiana Conference Youth Team, we agree to do two things: 1) to fulfill faithfully the terms and descriptions of the project as stated in this application; and 2) to submit a written report of the project, along with pictures from the project, within one month of the conclusion of the project or by September 1st, whichever is earlier.

Date

Signed by Contact person administratively responsible for project

Complete this form and return it postmarked no later than December 1st to:

Y S F Project Review Committee Louisiana Conference Council on Youth Ministry
527 North Boulevard Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70802-5700

Mission to eastern Russia works to provide basics of life to impoverished region

Editor's Note: The United Methodist News Service's coverage of the work of the Alaska Missionary Conference work in eastern Russia continues from the July 20 issue of LouisianaNow!

BY TIM TANTON

Speaking through interpreters, the Russian visitors to the Alaska Missionary Conference described the plight of the region. Galena Polvolski, from the Chukotka town of Provideniya, said electricity goes off and on during the day, and apartment buildings don't retain their heat. "They're always cold." The past winter was rough, and fuel rationing became necessary, she said.

Along with joblessness, alcoholism is a problem throughout the area, the Russians said. One of the task force's projects centers on treatment.

"The people are very, very capable, educated (and) acculturated," said Della Waghiyi's son, John Waghiyi Jr. However, their difficulties are beyond their control, he said. For example, supply shortages are chronic. The people depend on marine food - fish, walrus, whales, seals, birds - yet they lack the fuel to run their outboard motors, he said.

Fish runs were poor last year, Polvolski said. Part of the reason, she believes, is that Korean and possibly Japanese fishers reduced the traditionally large salmon runs that the Chukotka villages have relied upon in the past.

Rev. R. Bruce Weaver, who leads the United Methodist Church's Russia Initiative, said that with the exception of a few towns elsewhere in the country, "the Chukotka peninsula is under the most severe economic conditions of any place in Russia."

God's helpers

Within months of its formation, the Russian Far East Task Force had begun a soup kitchen in Anadyr, the capital of Chukotka, and provided funding to start "Boeg Pomesch," or "God's Helpers," which supplied food, medicine and clothing to those most in need. Other



A UMNS photo by Tim Tanton

Olyt Tevlianaout (left) and Lyuba Tayan inspect and fold clothes for shipment to needy people in Russia's Chukotka region. Tevlianaout and Tayan joined other volunteers in boxing up clothes during the Alaska Missionary Conference's annual meeting in Anchorage.

outreach followed, and the task force now has about a dozen projects in Chukotka.

The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) committed \$75,000 annually for three years, ending this year. The Moravians have given more than \$100,000 and The United Methodist Church's Native American Comprehensive Plan gave \$50,000 last year in support directly for the indigenous people. Combined with other contributions, the task force has drawn about \$500,000 in funding so far.

UMCOR's commitment ended this year, but the task force and the denomination's Russia Initiative have developed a plan for raising future support from other sources. The task force will work with churches throughout the denomination's Western Jurisdiction to get funding for its work, while the Russia

Initiative will rely on the other four U.S. jurisdictions, Weaver said.

In 2000, the Alaska Missionary Conference adopted the Russian Far East as its mission priority for the following year.

The conference members celebrated the outreach work during their annual gathering in May, held with the theme "With Russia In Love." Bishop Edward Paup, who leads the conference, announced that \$26,500 had been raised during the year.

Also during the conference, volunteers and members of the Russian group assembled 100 boxes of clothes - one and a half tons - for shipment to Chukotka. It is one of several shipments made since December.

Change under way

The outreach efforts are having an impact on the towns and villages of

Chukotka, members of the Russian delegation said during their visit. The programs serve about 50 villages, ranging in size from 300 to 1,500 people each, in addition to major towns such as Anadyr and Provideniya.

The relief comes in many forms. Funds sent to Chukotka are used to buy medical supplies and medicine for day care centers and food for terminally ill people, and to provide travelers with lodging. Church-supported programs also employ people in the region to knit scarves, hats, mittens, socks and pieces of parkas. The clothes are donated to needy people, the elderly, people with children. The task force has provided heaters, clothes, outboard motors, fishing nets, and school supplies.

Varya Litovka of Anadyr thanked the church workers for the pencils, paints, clothes and other materials that have been sent for the region's children. The supplies have enabled many children to go to school, she said.

Litovka leads several projects, including an educational program that pays children \$20 a month for doing work related to ecology and preservation. The children monitor sea life migrations, provide care for the elderly, work in a hospital and perform other jobs. "These children are family providers," she said.

In another program, the children are paid for their writings and drawings, which are used in calendars and post cards, Litovka said. Before receiving the supplies a year ago, many of the children had never drawn or written, she said.

Their pictures were displayed throughout the sanctuary at St. John United Methodist Church, where the missionary conference session was held. The drawings included wildlife scenes, with walruses, whales, birds and bears, as well as village landscapes and pictures of hunters. Letters of gratitude accompanied the artwork.

The conclusion of Tim Tanton's coverage of mission to eastern Russia will appear in the August 17 issue.

Louisiana Conference *NOW!*

William W. Hutchinson	Resident Bishop
Rena Yocom	Executive Director, Conference Mission and Ministries
Betty Backstrom	Editor
Joshua Lewis	Contributing Editor
Wendy Jones	Subscriptions

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Pastor seeks information on restorative justice

If your church is doing anything in the area of restorative justice, please send the information to Rev. John R. Johns, 1214 N. Second St., Jena, LA 71342 or e-mail to johns@centurytel.net. We are interested in hearing what ministries churches may have for those incarcerated, for their families, or for the victims.

YOUTH DIRECTOR

Grace United Methodist Church in Ruston is looking for a qualified individual to serve as full-time Youth Director. This position requires good organizational skills; the ability to plan and coordinate youth and children's activities; the ability to communicate with youth, children and their families; and strong spiritual depth and maturity. Interested candidates should submit a resume to the church office at 3401 North Trenton Street, Ruston, LA, 71270.

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Ninde Chapel United Methodist Church, formerly in the North Shore District, has been made part of the New Orleans District under Rev. Horace Brumfield.

District welcomes Ninde Chapel UMC

The New Orleans District's church membership has increased with the addition of Ninde Chapel United Methodist Church located in LaPlace. Ninde Chapel in the past shared a charge with St. James UMC located in Springfield and both churches were a part of the North Shore District. Reverend Horace Brumfield was appointed pastor of Ninde Chapel on March 11, and the church moved to the New Orleans District. Ninde Chapel is very small in membership and finds itself in the building process. "The Lord operates everything. We will get the church on its feet," said Brumfield. The church is seeking ways to bring members in. Brumfield is very interested in the upcoming Igniting Ministry campaign set to begin in September and sees it as a means of reaching the community.

District to sponsor evangelism workshop

The New Orleans District will hold an Evangelism Workshop on Saturday, Sept. 8 at Cornerstone United Methodist Church from 9 a.m. until noon.

The workshop will be led by Rev. Ramonalynn Bethley, pastor of Vivian UMC. Before becoming pastor at Vivian UMC, Bethley was associate pastor of Munholland UMC in Metairie for eight years. She received her Doctor of

Ministry in Evangelism Degree from Perkins School of Theology in Dallas.

The free Evangelism Workshop is designed to help churches of all sizes develop a plan for evangelism.

"It will be a 'nuts and bolts' approach to developing a system of congregational awareness and training," said Bethley. The system Bethley follows was developed while she was on staff at Munholland and it proved very successful. Even at Vivian success has been achieved.

"In the year that I have been pastor at Vivian, we have received twenty-three people into membership. That number is more than Vivian has taken in in the last three years combined," she said.

Anyone wishing to attend the Evangelism Workshop should contact the New Orleans District Office at (504) 488-5430.

Send your church's stories to the New Orleans District Communication Advisor:

Dian Kent
837 Sumner St.
New Orleans, LA 70114
(504) 528-2219

Lafon celebrates annual 'Jazzy Night'



Entergy Corporation was well represented at Jazzy Night by employees Bridget Carter, Cathy Herren and Elaine Coleman, with husband Bobby. Below, Lafon's Director of Development Ted Jones is flanked by two Jazzy Night committee members, Dian G. Kent, left, and Karen Nabonne Coaxum.



The residents of the Lafon Nursing Home of The United Methodist Church will benefit from the proceeds of the 2001 "A Jazzy Night in June" gala recently held at the Radisson Hotel in New Orleans.

The event grew out of an idea from Ted Jones, director of development at Lafon, into the event it is today. Over its nine-year history the event has undergone change to its initial format.

Initially a sit-down dinner was served, compared to the buffet style dinner today. "A Jazzy Night in June" in its third year featured Melba Moore in a solo act, in between its initial and later years of multiple entertainers. In recent years the William Houston Orchestra has provided big band dance music which has appealed to all age groups.

The Silent Auction was added five years ago, which has become a favorite of many, along with the

Patron Party, which features champagne and hors d'oeuvres.

The Note of Distinction Award, which recognized Public Service Commissioner Irma Muse Dixon this year, was developed to pay tribute to those members of the community who have been supportive of the Lafon Home.

The "Jazzy Night" planning committee is made up of local business representatives and members of the Friends of Lafon group.

"We are in need of new members," said Jones. "We find that members are rolling off of the committee after two or three years." Planning each year begins in the month of October and follows with one meeting per month.

"A Jazzy Night in June" 2002 will be held June 7 at the Radisson Hotel in New Orleans. Anyone wishing to become a member of the planning committee for the 2002 event should contact Jones at (504) 288-2314.

ON THE JOURNEY

Geronimo

On the wall of my study at home is a collage of pictures taken by my youngest son and my daughter-in-law, Laura. They went to visit my mother a few years ago and had her accompany them to my little hometown of Monument, New Mexico. They took pictures of several points of interests to them and then had them framed as a Father's Day gift to me that year.

The collage consists of seven pictures. One is of the old grocery store where I used to ride my bike to get a Dr. Pepper and pack of Tom's Toasted Peanuts. I would empty the peanuts into the Dr. Pepper for the most delicious of all drinks! Another picture is of "The Oil Patch Café", the site of my first "real" job,

a dishwasher, when I was in the sixth grade. "The Oil Patch Café" is still in operation even after all these years! Two are of the gasoline plant where my father worked and where I grew up. And one is of the brick arch that once was the entrance to the gymnasium of the little school I attended from first through ninth grade. The archway is all that stands of the original school building, the remainder having been destroyed by fire many years ago. All of these bring back great memories of a carefree and unbelievably happy childhood.

The two center pictures of the collage are the most symbolic of Monument. One is of a concrete statue of a Native American standing atop a base of caliche rock. The other is of the plaque on the base of the statue that gives a little history of this earliest settlement in Lea County. The figure has always been referred to as Geronimo, the leader of the Mescalero Apaches. He is facing west, shading his eyes with his left hand and looking intently into the sunset. He is placed in that position because he is looking toward Monument Spring, the only natural water to appear for hundreds of miles in any direction in this vast region of southeastern New Mexico. The spring was a literal oasis to early Indian dwellers and to those who sought to cross this treeless and desolate area long before there were modern modes of transportation. The spring was the "life line" for all early day inhabitants and travelers across the Llano Estacado, the "staked plains" of eastern New Mexico and west Texas.

I sit at my desk and look often at Geronimo, reflecting on childhood memories, but also on the theological significance of his stance. He is look-



Bishop William W. Hutchinson

"If a thirsting person were looking my way would I have a demeanor and presence about me that would say, 'I have found living water?'"

ing. He is searching. He is hoping he will see the monument, an ancient structure from which the community receives its name, built by others of his nomadic tribe and that marks the spot where the water is to be found. He is thirsty and in need of a drink.

We have beautiful biblical stories of wandering tribes and individuals who find themselves in the relentless wilderness of Judea or Egypt or other desert regions and whose very life is

dependent on locating water. Even Jesus finds himself in conversation with a Samaritan woman one day as he asks her to give him a drink from the well of her ancestors.

The statue of Geronimo stands today as a constant reminder of the search and need for water. We in the church know this need exists and we have water to offer – living water. There are so many persons who are wandering through this life who have an unquenched thirst. They are standing with their hands shading their eyes, looking for help. We, the church, are the oases for which they look. We are where living water should be being dispensed.

What have we done to raise our "monuments" that mark our fellowships as places where living water is found? Ask of yourselves these questions. If a thirsting person were looking my way would I have a demeanor and presence about me that would say, "I have found living water?" If a thirsting person were looking toward my church, would they say, "There's the 'monument' that marks the spot where living water is found?" How well have we done in being the source of living water for the thirsting of the world?

We must always be working on knowing how to offer living water to all who are on the dusty journey of life and who are looking for the source from which to quench their thirst. Isn't it amazing how far away from this joyful responsibility we can get sometimes? I pray we don't leave people with dust in their mouths when what they need is water!

In Christ's love,

Bill Hutchinson

Foundation hires new North La. representative

BY BETTY BACKSTROM
EDITOR

The United Methodist Foundation of Louisiana is pleased to announce Bob Carrell has accepted the position of Northern Louisiana representative for the Foundation.

A retired lieutenant colonel from the Air Force and a financial planner, Carrell will serve the Alexandria, Monroe, Ruston and Shreveport districts.

"I am looking forward to using my expertise in financial planning in furthering the purposes of the church," said Carrell.

Carrell is a graduate of the



Carrell

University of Houston as well as the Naval Post-Graduate School.

He is a life long United Methodist and currently a member of First United Methodist, Bossier City.

Carrell has been involved in the Disciple Bible Study Program as well as the Walk to Emmaus.

He and his wife Calli have been married for 24 years and have two sons, Brendan and Devin.

Snapshots of Annual Conference



Photo by Joshua Lewis

Former Louisiana Senate President Randy Ewing accepts the Public Servant Award from the La. Moral and Civic Foundation, presented by Ruston District Superintendent Jimmie Pyles, at right. The organization also presented its J. Henry Bowdon Preaching Award to Rev. Darryl Tate.

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Igniting Ministry, from page 1

relatives, friends, co-workers and business associates who are currently unchurched. Follow-up efforts will be conducted by Roberts UMC's Evangelism Team and other laypersons to encourage visitation.

The Denham Springs church also plans to heavily publicize and extend personal invitations to the church choir's annual musical, scheduled for September 30.

St. Luke UMC, Greenwell Springs, plans to invite the public to free, weekly blood pressure checkups conducted after church services on Sunday. "High blood pressure is a significant health issue today, especially among African Americans. Cheryl Augustus, RN, who works for Woman's Hospital, is conducting this volunteer effort which we hope will attract many visitors to St. Luke's," said Rev. Alonzo Campbell, director of Special Ministries for the Conference.

St. Paul's UMC, Monroe is conducting a church-wide Igniting Ministry training with a lunch immediately following morning worship one Sunday in August. The training will prepare members to help canvass surrounding neighborhoods on Sept. 8, inviting peo-

ple to worship at St. Paul's UMC.

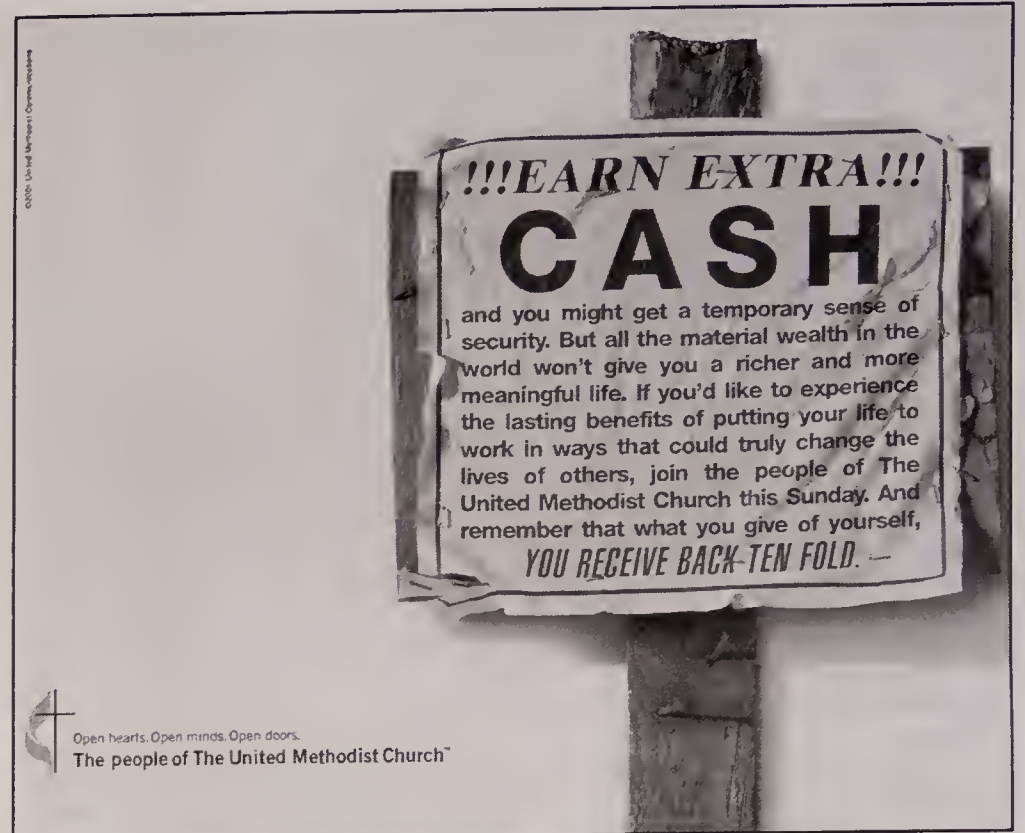
The Monroe church is initiating a weekly contemporary service, starting Sept. 9. Each week will focus on one aspect of the Igniting Ministry campaign theme, "Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors," and will have some type of advertising from the campaign displayed or viewed.

First UMC, Columbia is hosting "Open House Sunday," or "FRAngelism Sunday," where members will invite visitors to church services and a fellowship meal.

Several new outreach programs are being initiated, including "Parents Supporting Parents," a group focusing on raising children. The month of October will be devoted to visiting inactive church members.

At the Ruston District training this summer, churches were advised to ask Sunday school classes or other regular church groups to participate in the welcoming exercises found in the Igniting Ministry handbook as a "warm up" for September.

As Rev. Tom Logan of St. Charles UMC, Destrehan said at the New Orleans District training in July, "We all know what it means to be welcom-



The Igniting Ministry campaign will begin in September with national and state-wide television advertisements, as well as print ads like the one shown above.

ing and hospitable, but each and every church can do a little bit more toward that effort. Igniting Ministry gives us a unique opportunity to tell our story,

and we can't afford to let it pass by. Those of you who haven't planned anything yet, it's not too late to get on board."

Methodists work to loosen the grip of poverty in eastern Russia

Editor's Note: The United Methodist News Service's coverage of the work of the Alaska Missionary Conference work in eastern Russia continues from the Aug. 3 issue of Louisiana Now!

BY TIM TANTON

Many basic necessities are available in Russia, but people in the villages don't have the money to afford them. The task force has addressed that, in part, by sending cash in addition to supplies to trusted project leaders.

Chukotka has limited transportation resources. Supplies must be flown to villages by helicopter or, during the winter, shipped by track mobile at night when the snow is hard.

Shipping goods also takes time. "It takes two months to Anadyr, to get a box in, because there's no direct mail between Alaska to Chukotka," said Nancy Mendenhall, a United Methodist who leads Nome-based Alaskan Friends of Chukotka. Now boxes of clothes and supplies go 27,500 miles the other way around the world to reach people who may be only hundreds of miles away.

A channel also has been opened for bringing Russians from Chukotka to the United States for medical treatment. A girl has already undergone eye surgery, and plans are under way for bringing over a boy who has been severely burned.

Until recently, local Russian officials did not support the relief efforts and denied that a crisis existed. However, that attitude has changed with the arrival of a new governor.

Blood ties

The Russian visitors included a number of Yupik and Chukchi people, natives of the Chukotka region. The language

and ancestral ties with Alaskan natives have helped the mission work.

"Our connection is in Chukotka. Our blood, our brothers and sisters are over there," said John Waghiyi Jr.

Bishop Ruediger Minor, who leads the Russia Annual Conference, said the native population needs encouragement and support. "It's a very important and healthy thing that it's their own kin that's helping them."

The ecumenical ties are also important, Minor said. "It's important to show that it's possible to work together."

Churches often have difficulty working together in Russia, but he is noticing a change. "I have witnessed over the last few years a growing longing for more cooperation."

Western proselytizing has been a source of tension in Russia, particularly for the well-established Orthodox church. While Chukotka is seeing a growing number of conversions, the United Methodists have not rushed into setting up a bricks-and-mortar church.

"Generally speaking, we do not see humanitarian aid primarily as a means of church planting," Minor said.

The late Rev. Waghiyi envisioned a new, nondenominational Christian church, and Lyuba Tayan, a teacher from Anadyr, said that would be the most appropriate way to go.

Polvolksi praised the United Methodists and Moravians for not discriminating in the distribution of aid, as some church-based relief services do. "I want to acknowledge you for that and what you do for people on our side."

Celebration - and more work

The Russians' visit to Alaska represented the first time that all of the key leaders for the Chukotka relief efforts -

with one exception - were together.

"These are not just guests," Campbell told the Alaska Missionary Conference. "These are the hands, hearts and eyes of everything we are about."

During a celebration at the Alaska Native Heritage Center, two of the Russians, young people from the Chukchi tribe, performed traditional

dances. The Russian delegation expressed thanks to the Alaskans and received several gifts, including a 300-square-foot fishing net from the Moravians. "That'll tide a lot of people over," said the Rev. Walter Larson, Moravian pastor in Aleknagik, Alaska. "This is not just food for now. This is food for seasons to come."

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Asia, from page 1

knew the magnitude of the gathering and the feeling they would each leave with when the evening was over.

The concert started late because the hotel staff was opening up side rooms to try and fix the overflow of people gathered for the concert. It truly looked like a global gathering, and there were over 1,000 Cambodians, missionaries, and tourists present. While the chorale only sang one song in Khmer, the national language of Cambodia, the audience was moved to clap, sing along, and dance to the music throughout the concert. They were a witness to me and Youth Mission Chorale of the tenderness and healing that can come through Christ, even when one has suffered beyond understanding. We should all strive to have the faith and spirit of the Christians in Cambodia; it seems like they have it figured out.

Before I had time to log out of my email and pick up the phone to call Lorene, I knew I was going to say yes. In January, I applied for a summer internship with the General Board of Global Ministries, but it was not until March that I received details of my work. I was going to be one of the photographers and videographers for the Youth Mission Chorale 2001 Asia.

In order for people to keep up with the tour while we were away, the communications staff on the tour, consisting of Larry Nelson, our supervisor from United Methodist Communications, Tim Gates, a senior at Penn State in film and video, and myself, a communications/photojournalism major at Loyola University in New Orleans, carried a laptop, a satellite phone, two video cameras, a digital still camera, and three 35mm cameras with us across Asia to maintain a webpage at the General Board of Global Ministries web site. I did not know what to expect during the six-week tour, and the Lord was about to challenge me in new and different ways.

Two months and seven vaccination shots later, which were the first of the many challenges, I was on my way. On May 31 the 33 of us going on the trip gathered in New York City for an orientation and a night of rest before the 24-hour flight to Southeast Asia. We traveled to Bali and Jakarta, Indonesia; Singapore; Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; Phnom Penh and Siem Reap, Cambodia; Hong Kong; Shanghai and Beijing, China; and Ulaanbaatar as well as the countryside in Mongolia.

The ensemble included 23 college students from United Methodist church-

es and universities all over the U.S., Dr. S T Kimbrough, Associate General Secretary for Mission Evangelism, Joyce Sohl, Deputy General Secretary for the Women's Division, Dr. David Wu, Assistant General Secretary for Congregational Mission Initiatives, Jorge Lockward, Program Coordinator for Global Praise, Larry Nelson from United Methodist Communications, Andy and Camille Mattick, seminary students at Claremont serving as our counselors, Tim Gates, the other intern, and myself. We were a very diverse group of United Methodists, and we celebrated that every chance we got.

When we first arrived, I was somewhat unsure about our purpose in Asia, but after our first concert I was no longer in the dark. I have seen the light, and the light shines brightly half way around the globe. Asia knows Christ, and our presence there only strengthened our common faith.

During the first two weeks the Youth Mission Chorale rehearsed approximately 60 hours in preparation for the tour. The chorale was ready to hit the road, and the first concert proved what the power of unity in rehearsal and a little prayer could actually do.

At that first concert, the group performed to a packed sanctuary at Baithani (Bethany) Church in downtown Denpasar, Bali. This was around the time Louisiana United Methodist ministers were relaxing after Annual Conference or settling into new appointments. Local churches from around the island made a pilgrimage to Baithani to share in the fellowship of praise and music.

After the chorale's final song, Bethany's minister approached the stage and offered to say a prayer for the chorale. The entire congregation burst into an Indonesian benediction.

As the chorale's photographer and videographer, I was in the front row of the audience, snapping photographs. Eyes glued to the camera viewfinder, I watched the play of emotions on the faces of chorale members.

Turning around, with my back to the chorale, I could see what my peers were seeing. With arms raised and eyes closed, hundreds of Balinese Christians we did not know were singing their prayers of blessing and thanksgiving.

It was a moving experience for many of us, a moment that will not soon be forgotten.

Lane Winn's report of her experiences in Asia will continue in the Sept. 14 issue of Louisiana Now!



Lane Winn's job as an intern with the General Board of Global Ministries this summer was to photograph the Youth Mission Chorale as it toured the Far East. Above: Buddhist monks outside a monastery in Phnom Penh, Cambodia; below: at the Mongolia Opera House in Ulaanbaatar, the chorale rehearses a Charles Wesley Suite arranged by a Mongolian conductor.



Winn traveled with the Youth Mission Chorale to Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Cambodia, Hong Kong, China and Mongolia. From bottom left: performers of the traditional Barong dance in Bali, Indonesia; soldiers marching around Tiananmen Square in Beijing, China; woman lighting incense outside of Buddhist temple Angkor Wat in Cambodia.

Photos by Lane Winn



Grace Community hosts pastor from South Pacific

Sione Tu'uta, intern pastor at Grace Community UMC, Shreveport, is currently pursuing ordination and is completing his educational requirements with his Perkins School of Theology Internship. While at Grace Community, Sione's primary areas of ministry will be congregational care and single adult ministry. Additionally, he will be doing a community analysis project to propose future ministries for Grace



Sione Tu'uta

Community UMC. At this time, Sione is a certified candidate for elder in the New Mexico Conference, but looks forward to his time here in Louisiana. Sione will be at Grace Community UMC until May 2002. Sione is from the Kingdom of Tonga in the South Pacific.

Before coming to the United States, Sione was a teacher at Tupou College (Methodist boarding school) and traveled internationally with the Tongan National Rugby Team. Sione continues to play and hopes to coach professional rugby here in the States.



Members of Fellowship United Methodist Church in Bossier City raised money for their Volunteers in Mission trip with a car wash during Annual Conference in Shreveport.



Churches combine talents for mission

For the third consecutive year, members of Bethel and Logansport United Methodist Churches combined their talents, energy, and resources to make a mission trip to the Rio Grande Conference in Texas, the only Spanish-speaking Methodist conference in the United States.

The Mission Team, which was made up of 41 men, women, youth, and children, left Logansport on June 28 for El Divino Salvador Iglesia Metodista Unida in Temple, Tex.

They provided materials and did extensive repairs on the parsonage, worked on beautification of the sanctuary building, and conducted a

Vacation Bible School at El Buen Pastor Iglesia Metodista Unida in Moody, Tex.

In addition to cooking their own meals and feeding the people of both congregations, team members served meals to community who came to the church and appeared to be in need of food.

After attending worship services and providing special music, the group returned home on July 1. Rev. Mark Strickland is pastor of Logansport First United Methodist Church, and Bethel United Methodist Church is co-pastored by Charles and Frances Freeman.



SUMMER CELEBRATION AT BETHEL UMC

The congregation at Bethel United Methodist Church celebrated summer recently with dinner-on-the-grounds and a watermelon eating contest. Two of the youngest "expert" watermelon eaters, Hunter Wheless and Nina Amox, demonstrate their championship style.

Benton hires first-ever youth director

Benton United Methodist Church has named John Robert Black as its first-ever youth director.

The Homer native is a business education teacher and coach at Parkway High School, and a graduate of Northwestern State University. He and

his wife Jennifer are the parents of two young children.

As youth director at the church, Black will plan and direct activities for middle school and high school age. He will direct summer trips, mission projects and other events.

God's Food Pantry opens in Logansport

Under the sponsorship of Bethel United Methodist Church, God's Food Pantry, opened in Logansport on June 21.

The Pantry offers supplemental food to qualified clients on the third Thursday of every month.

The town of Logansport has provided a main street store-front location. God's Food Pantry is an approved agency of the Northwest Louisiana Food Bank. Food is provided by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, and by donor organizations and companies.

Shipping and handling charges of 14 cents per pound are paid by contributions from churches and individuals.

The pantry is operated under the Bethel UMC Mission Program, chaired by Melissa Dykes. Volunteers from Bethel and other local churches are pro-

viding volunteer workers.

Fifty-seven households consisting of seventy-one adults and twenty-four children were served in June.

Over seventy households with over 140 members have applied for food in July.

By fall the pantry will be serving approximately 100 households.

Send your church's stories to the District Communication Advisor:

Mary Jarvis
169 Patton Ave.
Shreveport, LA 71106
(318) 861-0586
maryj@broadmoorumc.org



Casey Wells (left center) visits with Andrew Cooper, Leslie Leavoy, John Michael Morvan, Trea Trifenback, J. Paul Naquin, Jessica Downs, Ryan Hull, Blaise Dumesnil, Trey Officer, and Jennifer Downs following the Lunch Bunch Program at First United Methodist Church in DeRidder.

Church's Lunch Bunch program feeds kids during summer break

This summer, First United Methodist Church in DeRidder bused children of various ages to the church gym each day between 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. for a kid-friendly meal called the Lunch Bunch.

"We have kids ages kindergarten through sixth grade joining us for lunch," said Mary Wells, coordinator of the Lunch Bunch program. "Our average number of boys and girls is about 100. They primarily come from Beaucare, Big Brothers and Big Sisters and from the community at large."

The Lunch Bunch, which is free, is a means of providing nutritionally balanced meals to children when school lunch programs are not open, as well as a means to give a break to parents who work outside the home.

About 10 volunteers are needed each day to run the Lunch Bunch program. Currently volunteers are representatives of First UMC, the Women's League and Beaucare.

"Even our 'Kids N Action' group helps out a good deal each day bussing tables and cleaning up," said Wells. "It puts their ministry to work and teaches the rewards of serving all at once."

The Lunch Bunch Program is funded by a United Methodist Conference grant, Wal-Mart and donations—both food and monetary—from the community.

"We do not get paid, except by the thanks and gratefulness of the children," said Wells. "The Lunch Bunch has been a dream of mine for a long time, and I am blessed to have my community and church support it."



Several United Methodist Men from the Lake Charles District traveled a thousand miles to Purdue University in West Lafayette, Ind., for the organization's national meeting. Pictured are: Garth Frenzel, Henning Memorial United Methodist Church; Rev. John Higinbotham, Maplewood UMC; Irwin Abraham, Warren UMC; Charlie Taylor, Maplewood UMC; Erich Mansell, Henning Memorial UMC; and Robert Handy, Warren UMC.

Youth lead worship at Welsh Memorial

Vinton-Sixteen-year-old Jessica Stinson recently stood at the pulpit in Welsh Memorial United Methodist Church and preached on the topic "Are You Ready?"

She was part of a 40-member youth team that led the church service that day and provided the music.

Challenged with preaching sermons for two services, Stinson said she entered the sanctuary a little nervous and wondered how the adult congregation would receive her message.

"I felt I had chosen my topic well. Whether young or old, as a Christian you need to ask yourself, if God were to call you home today, are you ready?"

She said that once she got started preaching, an ease came over her and that she could see the congregation was listening.

One of the things she had hoped to do was to make it known to her peers and the adult congregation how hard it is for young people to live according to Christian principles.

"In the secular world there is so much diversion. Its influence can be seen at school and in other social settings," she said.

"During those times, to openly talk about or stand up for your religious beliefs definitely places you in the minority," she said.

"Since I've already committed my life to Christ and made the conscious decision to be a Christian, I don't want to be an on-again, off-again Christian, and I'm not," she said.

"A lot of teen Christians want to stand up for their beliefs but find it hard. They want to fit in with the crowd. But then you have to ask yourself, 'Is this the right type of crowd?' she said.

Stinson said one of the things that keeps her focused is the strength of several local youth organizations.

"As a Christian you need to ask yourself, if God were to call you home today, are you ready?"

"When you can gather with friends with Him at your side, fun takes on a whole new meaning. He keeps you grounded and focused," she said.

Stinson works regularly in the youth program at the church and is considered a person to be looked up to.

Youth director Michelle Merchant said she's never seen a young person so committed to her beliefs.

"We deal with children from the age of 5 through the teen-age years. She is an inspiration to them all," she said.

Stinson has attended numerous church camps; worked with the United Methodist Committee on Relief, sending supplies to areas hit by natural disasters; and been part of the Conference Council on Youth Ministries, planning youth activities statewide.

Stinson said that as a young Christian she would like to see a meeting of the minds in the Christian world and for everyone to come together.

"After all, we all serve the same God," she said.

Reprinted with permission from the Lake Charles American Press.



Vacation Bible School participants at Warren United Methodist Church show their excitement to the processional leader during the closing program. More than 70 children, youth and adults attended the event.

Send your church's stories to the District Communication Advisor:

Constance Handy
2706 Walden Dr.
Lake Charles, LA 70607
(337) 474-4187
handyjrr@aol.com



Ruston District Igniting Ministry training raises many questions

BY Verna Myers
DISTRICT MISSIONER

"Who taught you how to read the Bible? Who taught you how to pray? Who taught you how to worship?"

These were just three of the questions Dawn Hand, Western North Carolina Conference Director of Communication, asked the 108 attendees during the Igniting Ministry Training at First United Methodist Church of Arcadia July 10.

The responses came back quickly from all sides of the room. "My mother...my father...my grandparent, a caring neighbor, a Sunday school teacher." We smiled and relaxed, confident that our answers were right on target and they were. We had gone for the bait.

Now Dawn began to reel us in. "Sure everyone here has an answer," our trainer continued. "But, are you aware that we are living in a world where the growing majority of our friends and neighbors have no answer for any of these questions."

"They have no point of reference for our religious jargon and no seeming need for what we have to offer. The latest Barna research shows that many visitors feel uncomfortable and even unwelcome in our friendly little church families.

"Within ten minutes, they have decided if they will come back or not. There are no second chances to make a first impression. What will your church do?"

"What will each of you do when people from your community see the national and conference media cam-

"There are no second chances to make a first impression. What will each of you do when people from your community see the national and conference media campaign spots and drop into your local church?"

paign spots and drop into your local church? Can you begin tonight to prepare your congregation to welcome, disciple, and ignite ministry using the UM Communications Planning Kit?" How many of you have a kit?"

"Yes, about those backordered kits... How many of you will accept this challenge and call the Igniting Ministry's toll-free number tomorrow and demand they produce more kits immediately? Great! Don't tell them I told you to bother them. O.K? Moving right along."

"Brother Wayne Evans, am I on? Do I need new batteries for this microphone pack?"

What do you all think? Won't Mr. King look better in his IM tee-shirt than the bass boat he hoped was his door prize?"

"Suzanne Taylor, could you push this button so we can see the Diversity ad? Could you push it again? Again? Again? Brother Wayne, any more batteries...?"

"Renee Evans, do you have the name of whoever baked this cookie? How



Dawn Hand, center, director of communication for the Western North Carolina Conference, made a special Igniting Ministry presentation to the Ruston District in July. She is pictured with District Missioner Verna Myers, left, and Dr. Suzanne Taylor, district Spiritual Disciplines coordinator.

about this one...?"

"Verna Myers, can you just speak into my shirt so everyone can hear you?"

"Will you all read this slide with me?"

"Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors. The people of the United Methodist Church."

"Who are we?"

"We are the people of the United Methodist Church!"

"I am A UNITED METHODIST," Jim Anderson, the District Lay Leader, excitedly shouted.

We all got quite a kick out of Dawn's training style. The questions continue, "Will we be ready?" Company's coming.



Hodge and New Hope United Methodist Churches recently completed Disciple Bible Study 1 and 2 at the La. Conference Center in Woodworth. Hodge and New Hope would like to give special thanks to Carol Cotton-Winn for leading the closing with a labyrinth prayer walk.



The East Wind Mission group from Downsville United Methodist Church recently completed its annual mission trip. This year they raised funds and helped Old Cedar UMC in Finley, Okla., build a fellowship hall. The highlight was sharing God's love with our Native American friends in the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference.

Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church near Homer recently celebrated the remodeling of its sanctuary. "We are so proud that we were financially able to complete this task without borrowing any money," said Building Committee Chairwoman Dianne Harmon, kneeling at right. "It was all from the love of our congregation and friends."



Springhill seeks former pastors' photos

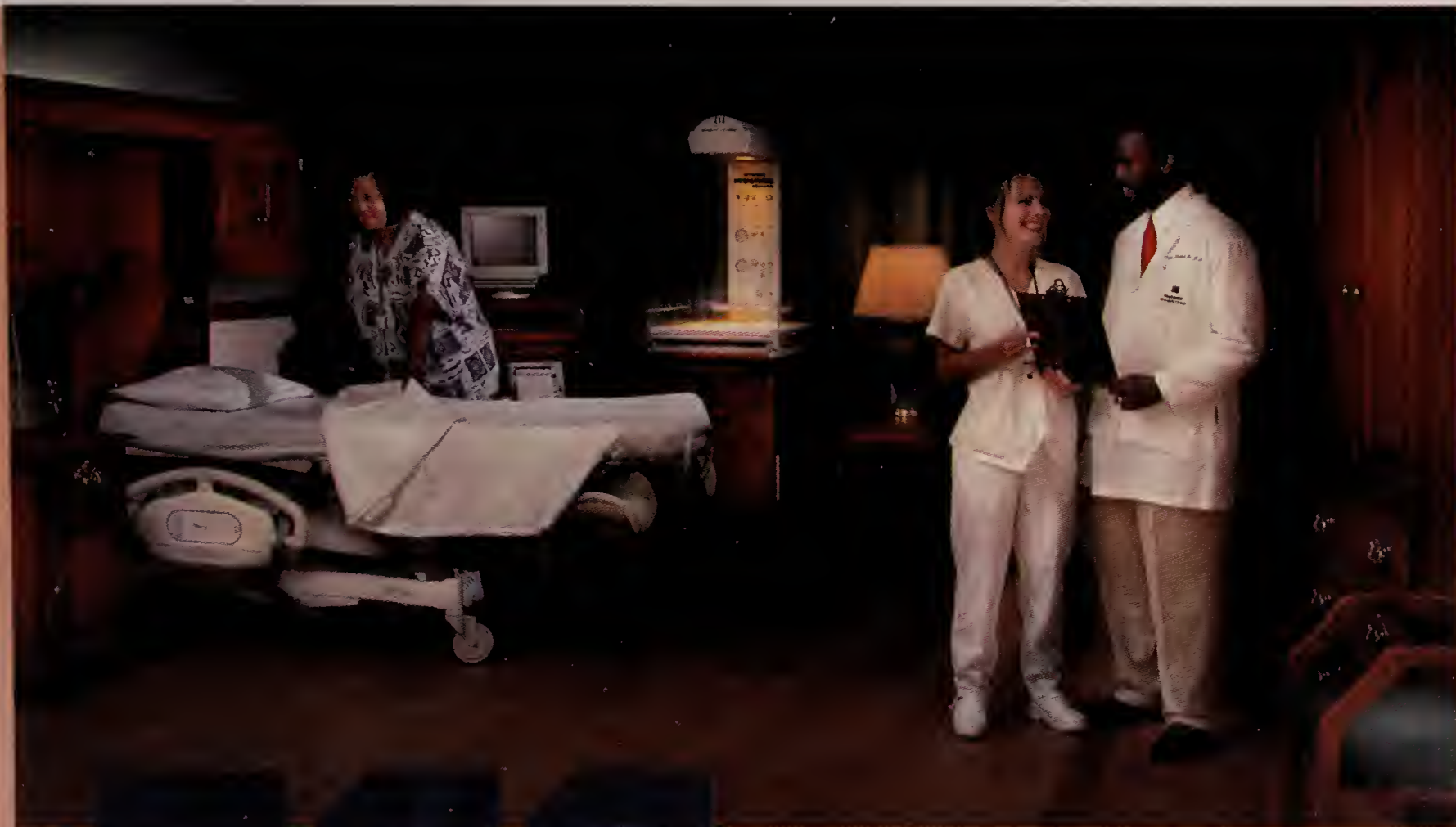
Springhill United Methodist Church is collecting pictures of the church's past ministers.

If you have photos of any of the following pastors, please contact Eluida Flanakin at P.O. Box 222, Springhill, LA, 71075.

1895: Robert W. Vaughn; 1897: William Martin; 1902: H. W. Ledbetter; 1904: W. A. Hart; 1906: D. Fordham and W.L. Hunter; 1907: A.A. Bernard; 1908: J.L.

Lay; 1909: R.H. Bamburg; 1910: Robert Randle; 1912: A.D. George; 1913: J.L. Cady; 1915: T.J. Holladay; 1917: A.J. Bonnett; 1920: J.C. Rousseaux; 1922: Robert Thorpe and T.W. St. John; 1924: H.B. Hines; 1927: J.E. Selfe; 1928: G.A. Morgan; 1930: A.S.J. Neill; 1931: E.C. Dufresne; 1934: A.M. Wynne; 1937: R.A. Bozeman; 1938: A.C. Lawton; 1940: G.A. Morgan; 1942: W.D. Kleinschmidt; 1944: D.F. Anders; 1957: W.R. Wendt.

Send your church's stories to the Ruston District Communication Advisors:
Rev. Joe and Danielle Hamilton, P.O. Box 1658, Hodge, LA 71247
(318) 254-8200 E-mail: djhamilton@iglide.net



Methodist Women's Center

Through the Seasons of Your Life

"To every thing there is a season
and a time to every purpose
under the heaven..."

Ecclesiastes 3:1

Join Us For Our Grand Opening Celebration

The Methodist Women's Center and its affiliated physicians are proud to announce the opening of their new facility offering a wide range of healthcare services for every phase of a woman's life.

Tuesday, August 28

Activities include:

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 9 am - 11 am | Live broadcast by WWL Radio
host André Trevigne |
| 9 am - 6 pm | Tours of the center with light
refreshments and special gifts |
| 10 am - 6 pm | Women's Expo and Baby Fair to
include free screenings and hourly
drawings for door prizes |



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Performers sought for 2002 Conference

The Conference Worship Committee would like to hear from choirs and various other church music and arts (drama, dance, etc.) groups around the Conference who might like to be among the worship leadership for Annual Conference in June 2002.

Please send a videotape of your group and written description of what you would be interested and ready to offer in the way of a presentation for conference. For consideration for the 2002 conference, these items must be received in the Conference Office (c/o Rena Yocum, 527 North Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA, 70802.) no later than Oct. 15.

Lafon Home to host benefit luncheon

The Lafon Home will hold its annual luncheon and "fashion extravaganza" Sept. 8 at 1 p.m. at Sclafani's in New Orleans.

For ticket information, contact Lucinda Bynum at (504) 241-7138 or 945-9448.

INSIDE



World Methodist Conference /9

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District / 11



Evaluations mailed to churches as Igniting Ministry launches

Company's coming! The national observance of "United Methodist Open House Month" in September is just around the corner.

As voted on by the General Conference, a multi-million dollar national cable/broadcast buy, coupled with more than \$100,000 worth of television commercials set to air Conference-wide, are aimed at creating an inviting, hospitable image for Louisiana's local churches. The Conference television buy is aided largely by a matching grant from United Methodist Communications and a \$30,000 grant from the



United Methodist Foundation of Louisiana.

In addition, 61 billboards across the state will be promoting The United Methodist Church to support the television campaign.

A multitude of creative, "welcoming" efforts by local churches have emerged in the wake of regional, district-wide and

individual church trainings throughout the conference.

In an effort to gather information on the outcomes of the Igniting Ministry Campaign, an Evaluation Form has been mailed to every local church in the Conference. Questions regarding weekly visitors, special church efforts and events, and suggestions for improvement in the Igniting Ministry Campaign are designed to help the Conference measure successes and make adjustments for future efforts.

See Igniting Ministry, page 4

Touching lives at G.R.A.C.E. Camp



G.R.A.C.E. Camp, a program designed to minister to the children of incarcerated people, is only one of many Restorative Justice programs being undertaken in the Louisiana Conference under the coordination of Rev. John R. Johns. Above left, a camper makes magic with a star-capped wand. Volunteers Violet Edwards and Connie Cockerham link arms with camp co-directors Becky Wimberly and Rev. Lorris Wimberly, above. At left, Ronald Garnett and Oscar Toups, inmates from Work Training Facility North in Pineville, offer witness to young campers. The two men head prison clubs which collected scholarship money for the campers. In this issue, *Louisiana Now!* presents a special newsletter about the Restorative Justice programs of the Louisiana Conference, which can be found in the center section of the newspaper.

ON THE JOURNEY

All Those Who Cry for Help

We were in mid-flight somewhere between Reno, Nevada and Dallas, Texas. I noticed the flight attendants were a little more harried than usual and there was a lot of coming and going from the rear of the plane. One attendant kept going into the pilot's cabin and shutting the door while another stood outside with a worried look on her face. I thought, "Oh no, what is wrong with the plane." Immediately dozens of not so positive thoughts began to race through my head.

In a little bit, after another trip or two to the rear of the aircraft, the attendant came on the intercom and asked, "Is there anyone on board who has medical knowledge, like a doctor or a nurse?"

If so, would you please ring your call button?" I began to listen for that familiar sound but there was only silence. "Surely," I thought, "someone is on here who has some medical expertise." But that wasn't the case.

Just knowing there were no medical personnel on the plane made me feel a little bit sick at my stomach! Suddenly my mind began to play real games with my body and I was thinking, "I think I might be a little sick myself. And there is no one on this plane who can help me!" The air seemed to get thinner and the "suddenly sick" feeling began to increase. I just had to give myself a good talking to so I wouldn't feign illness when it wasn't a reality.

Not far out of Dallas the captain came on the intercom and said, "Folks, we have a passenger who is in need of immediate medical attention when we land and we have called ahead for the paramedics. They will meet us at the gate and we ask that each of you remain seated while the paramedics board the plane and make their way to the rear of the aircraft to attend to the passenger in need. When we have a signal from them as to what they will need to do, we will then let you know when it is alright for you to deplane."

When we landed everyone sat perfectly still until the paramedics boarded. They walked determinedly to the back. In a short while the two paramedics came up the aisle following a young woman who was bent over and had a very distressed look on her face. They quickly deplaned and were on their way to medical care.

As I sat and pondered this whole scene I couldn't help but think of the church. In a way this was a prophetic parable. The aircraft represented the church. The plea for medical help was



Bishop William W. Hutchinson

"How many times do we have people enter our churches, crying for help, and we don't know what to do with them!"

similar to the cries of the world for spiritual help. The silence of the "call button" was akin to the silence of our church membership when asked by the sick and dying, "What must we do to be saved?" The fear and distress of the one who was sick was similar to the fear and distress of those flailing about in the world, seeking direction and help from those who surround them, particularly those in the church, and hearing only silence. The aircraft full of silent passengers was like the silent church that has no knowledge of what to do in emergency situations. It was an eerie comparison.

How many times do we have people enter our churches, crying for help, and we don't know what to do with them! In our paralysis of not knowing, we call outside resources and ask for the experts, the paramedics if you will, to come to our aid and deal with the need of the desperate. And we, the active body of Christ, simply sit still while someone else cares for those who cry for help.

It is my prayer that the church will become so strong in her life-saving skills that when the cry for help is lifted in our midst almost any one of us can respond, "Here I am! Let me sit with you and help you through your dilemma. Here I am! Let me share with you the Words of Life and offer to you salvation from your distress. Here I am! Let me listen to your fears and comfort your anxieties. Here I am! Let me introduce you to the savior of the world who will meet your every need."

What a day of rejoicing it will be when we arrive at the point of being the church so completely that we don't have to rely on other sources to offer people life, spiritual health, and hope! How do you feel about your skills in these areas? I know mine continually need to be sharpened! As we journey together, let us pray diligently for each other, and work steadily together until God so fills us with the Holy Spirit that we can truly "be there" for all those who cry for help.

In Christ's love,

Bill Hutchinson



"Communication: from Confrontation to Reconciliation" was the theme of the 3rd Congress of the World Association for Christian Communicators, which took place July 3-7 in the Leeuwenhorst Conference Centre near Amsterdam in the Netherlands. Louisiana Conference Director of Mission and Ministry Dr. Rena Yocom, who serves as vice-president of WACC, presided over several sessions at the congress. The final declaration was read out to more than 300 delegates from 80 countries and said that, "Establishing the truth, strengthening justice and restoring human dignity do not of themselves lead to reconciliation. The will to reconcile is an unconditional act of faith and love. It calls for careful dialogue and mutual understanding." Yocom is being photographed by a member of the Religion Communicators Council.

Snapshots of Annual Conference



Bishop Alfred L. Norris, above with wife, Mackie, served as keynote speaker. Below, the ubiquitous yellow-shirted crew helped make Annual Conference run smoothly.



Conference Center director takes new position



An Open Letter

To the Louisiana Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church

Dear Friends,

Cheryle and I are leaving The Louisiana Conference Center to take a position at a new camp and conference center in Western North Carolina. This decision to leave Louisiana when things are going so well at the Center has been bittersweet. We feel that the opportunity to serve God in this new ministry is the right thing for us to do. However, we know we will be sad to leave behind so many friends and happy memories.

The future of The Louisiana Conference Center is very bright. I don't say this because I am leaving. This is a great Annual Conference with many wonderful people with magnificent visions for God's work. The conference center can help play a significant role in helping to fulfill these visions. I want to encourage you to continue your support and prayers for The Louisiana Conference Center. In time you will realize that as goes the Center, so goes The Annual Conference—both are the people of God.

We wish you the very best as you build on your visions. Again, we will take with us many happy memories and friendships. There is no easy way to say farewell except to say that we love you and will miss you.

May the Peace of the Lord be always with you,

Tom and Cheryle Robertson
Louisiana Conference Center

Conference Center seeks new director

The Louisiana Conference Center of The United Methodist Church is seeking an Executive Director for its growing 128-bed facility. BA with minimum five years successful experience in a comparable setting, or an equivalent combination of education and experience, required.

Successful candidate will have leadership skills in the areas of fiscal management, facility/property manage-

ment, superior guest relations, strategic planning, marketing, food service, and staff training and development. Compensation package includes competitive salary, excellent benefits and a very nice on-site residence. Send resume or for more information contact: Executive Search, Louisiana Conference Center, 2350 Methodist Parkway, Woodworth, LA 71485. Deadline will be September 20.

Bishop to host first annual golf tournament

The Sprint PCS® Bishop's Conference Center Golf Tournament is scheduled for Monday, Oct. 8 at the Alexandria Country Club. The format of the tournament is a four-person team scramble with shotgun start at 10 a.m.

Teams may enter for a fee of \$600, individuals may play for \$150. The cost includes greens fees, driving range fees, cart rental, shirt, lunch and refresh-

ments. Golf attire and soft spikes are required.

A "bed and breakfast" package is available for those wishing to stay at the Conference Center on Sunday evening.

Hole sponsorships are available, and more facts about sponsorship opportunities or additional tournament information may be obtained by calling Cathy Wimberley at (318) 449-4500.

Golf Tournament Registration Form

Entry Fee/Course

\$600 per team/\$150 per person. Includes greens fees, driving range fees, cart rental, shirt, lunch and refreshments.

Name: _____ Handicap: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: () _____ Fax: () _____

Checks payable to: Louisiana Conference Center
2350 Methodist Parkway, Woodworth, LA 71485

Lake Charles District hosts financial workshop

Thirty-four out of 38 ministers from the Lake Charles District attended a "Faith and Money" workshop held on Aug. 3. The event is one in a series of workshops sponsored by the Cabinet, the Council on Finance and Administration and The United Methodist Foundation of Louisiana as part of a Stewardship Initiative of the Foundation.

Over 145 lay persons were also in attendance at the workshop, which is designed to equip clergy and lay leaders with the tools to develop financial plans for their respective churches.

"This seminar is one of the finest things we have experienced in the United Methodist church in a long time. The clarity of presentation on issues surrounding financial stewardship was exceptional. The point was clearly made that stewardship is a key part of discipleship," said District Superintendent Doug Ezell.

The last workshop in the series will be presented in the Baton Rouge District on Sept. 6.

For more information about the workshop, contact the Foundation office at (225) 346-1535.

Monroe District to explore 'rural redemption'

"Rural Redemption: From Depression to Dream," a workshop designed to heighten awareness of poverty in North Louisiana, will be held at First United Methodist Church, West Monroe on October 20.

Sponsored by the Monroe District, this seminar will teach participants how to decrease poverty and motivate local communities to connect services with

those in need. Churches and community organizations will come away with practical tips and suggestions to help those who are impoverished.

A main focus of the workshop is to motivate those who attend to help persons in need who live near our churches and in our communities.

For registration information, contact your District office or District Missioner.

Ask and you shall receive!

If you want the latest news, opportunities, and witness in Louisiana United Methodism, just ask for *La.NOW!* and you will receive it. If you already subscribe, pass the form along to a friend and spread the Good News!

Name _____

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☐ \$15 (One year)

☐ \$25 (Two years)

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Louisiana Conference *NOW!*

William W. Hutchinson	Resident Bishop
Rena Yocom	Executive Director, Conference Mission and Ministries
Betty Backstrom	Editor
Joshua Lewis	Contributing Editor

Wendy Jones Subscriptions

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—New Address—

On the Web

You can find the Louisiana Annual Conference on the Internet at
<http://www.la-umc.org>

Company, *from page 1*

Local churches are asked to complete the forms by Oct. 10 and fax or mail them to the Communications Office of the Louisiana Methodist Conference, 527 North Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70802.

The most important efforts of the campaign involve churches working to adopt a lifestyle of inviting, welcoming and discipling. Greeting visitors is the responsibility of everyone in the congregation.

Church members should focus on those sitting within 10 feet around them during the three minutes before and after the service. Did you know most newcomers leave within three minutes after the closing benediction?

Invite people to the party! Television ads alone will not produce a strong church. Invite friends, relatives, associates and neighbors to your church. It's called the F.R.A.N. Because the TV ads "till the soil" for you, inviting persons to church won't seem so awkward.

Let us hold to the campaign "promise" made in a simple phrase at the end of each commercial: "If you're searching for something to believe in or belong to, you're not alone. Our hearts, our minds and our doors are always open . . . the people of The United Methodist Church."

Greeting is the job of the entire congregation.

A few helpful hints for preparing for "Open House Month" include:

Use bulletin boards, kiosks and/or a welcome center to highlight children's activities, educational programs, missions, etc., and to post a welcome message.

Be sure your church can accommodate people with special physical needs.

Paint, repair, weed, plant, wash, decorate, with special attention to nursery and children's areas.

Consider a visitor's point of view when designing worship bulletins and developing worship service announcements.



Last night,
I watched
my daughter sleeping.
Smelling of soap and
tangle-free shampoo.
And suddenly the responsibility of preparing
that little human being for the world
was overwhelming.
I'm 36, and single. And I am strong.
That's why I'm here.

If you're searching for something to believe in, or for your children to believe in, meet us at The United Methodist Church. Our hearts, our minds and our doors are always open.

open hearts
open minds
open doors

The people of The United Methodist Church™

The Igniting Ministry campaign will begin in September with national and state-wide television advertisements, as well as print ads like the one shown above.



At Annual Conference, Rev. Alonzo Campbell and Ruth Handy displayed a photograph of her husband, Bishop W.T. Handy, for use at the convocation and related events.

Broadmoor UMC, Baton Rouge, to host INJOY leadership seminar via satellite

Broadmoor United Methodist Church, Baton Rouge, will host an INJOY Maximum Impact seminar featuring John C. Maxwell's TEAM Simulcast from 8 a.m.-3 p.m. on Sept. 15.

The seminar is based on a book by Maxwell entitled "The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork," to be released this fall.

The nationwide simulcast will be seen by over 75,000 Christians in 700 cities.

Best-selling authors John C. Maxwell ("The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership") and Bruce Wilkinson ("The Prayer of Jabez") will lead this

seminar on teambuilding live via satellite.

Cast members of the hit television show "Survivor" will also lead participants through an interactive "Survivor Challenge" with a strong focus on teamwork.

Participants will discover opportunities to develop and apply talents, learn the power of teamwork, and find exciting individual niches.

The seminar is recommended for all in leadership roles in Christian churches and businesses.

Early registration is \$35. For more information, call Broadmoor UMC at (225) 924-6269.

Handy Convo to focus on black church

The second annual W. T. Handy Jr. Convocation, scheduled for Nov. 9-10 at Dillard University in New Orleans, will focus on "Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st century."

Alfred L. Norris, currently serving as the resident bishop of the Houston Area Texas Annual Conference, will serve as keynote speaker for the convocation. Bishop William Hutchinson will conduct a workshop entitled "Carrying Out Your Local Church's Vision" during the event.

Ruth Handy will give a presentation on the "life and legacy" of her late husband, Bishop W. T. Handy Jr. Their son, Rev. Stephen Handy, will share success stories about a unique youth ministry he currently works with in Tennessee.

Fred Banks, lay leader for Roberts United Methodist Church in Denham Springs, will speak on effective lay leadership. Banks serves as chairperson of

the Louisiana Conference Mission Funding Team and North Shore District's 1000 Club Director.

Other workshops will focus on computer technology, financing youth programs, and taxes and pensions.

Rooms have been reserved at the airport Days Inn in Kenner (504-469-2531) and the LaQuinta Inn, New Orleans East (800-531-5900).

Call soon to obtain a room; all reservations must be made by Oct. 15. Participants may also stay in another hotel of their choice.

Registration for the convocation (see form below) is \$25 for forms received by Oct. 1, and \$35 after that date. For more information about the event, contact Special Ministries, P. O. Box 193, Denham Springs, LA, 70727; phone, (225) 664-7979; fax, (225) 664-7955; e-mail, Robumc@yahoo.com.

W.T. Handy Convocation Registration

November 9-10, 2001

\$25 Early Registration through October 1

\$35 Registration October 2 - November 9

District: _____

Church: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Telephone: () _____ Fax: () _____

Checks payable to: Louisiana Conference Special Ministries
P.O. Box 193, Denham Springs, LA 70727



The New Gate



A LouisianaNow! Special Newsletter
About Restorative Justice Programs in the Louisiana Conference

From the Coordinator of Restorative Justice

Dear Friends in Christ:

This newsletter has been named *The New Gate* for several reasons. The original New Gate was a prison in England frequented by members of the Holy Club at Oxford University, later to be called Methodists. John and Charles Wesley were often found ministering to people on death row. This was a very important part of the life of the early Methodists. Prison ministry is not a new fad, but a vital part of our history.

The New Gate also points to a new emphasis in ministry for many today. We Christians are part of a ministry of and to incarcerated people. Peter, Paul, Barnabas, Stephen, John the Baptist, and yes, even Jesus were prisoners. He and his disciples were executed for their faith. In Matthew 25, we are called by Jesus to go to the "least of the brethren," which includes those in prison. We are also called to those who have been damaged by crime—victims of crime, families of victims, families of the incarcerated, corrections officers, members of law enforcement, and those people in the community who no longer feel safe.

We will seek to use *The New Gate* as a tool to inform, motivate and equip The United Methodist Church and others to find blessing in this essential ministry. Let us know what you are doing and how we can help you. You may contact me at 1214 N. Second St., Jena, LA 71342. The telephone number is (318) 992-7347, fax (318) 992-7367, and e-mail address is johns@centurytel.net.

A gate is an entrance to a new place. As we enter into a new adventure in ministry, may God bless us with faithfulness and opportunity. May we trust him for success in this ministry.

Yours in Christ's love and service,

John R. Johns



Photo by Betty Backstrom

Coordinator for Restorative Justice in the Louisiana Conference Rev. John R. Johns talks with youth at G.R.A.C.E. Camp, a program for children of incarcerated persons.

G.R.A.C.E. Camp offers love and care for children of incarcerated



G.R.A.C.E. Camp offers youth whose parents are in prison the chance to experience love and acceptance.

"I was running from God, so God sat me still so that I could be obedient," said Oscar Toups while addressing children and youth attending a recent session of G.R.A.C.E. Camp at Uskichitto Retreat Center.

Toups, an inmate at Work Training Facility North in Pineville, shared the story of his life—in and out of prison—with the campers, who are children of incarcerated persons throughout the state.

The 33-year-old inmate's story was both inspiring and heartbreaking as he shared his journey from life as a successful business owner and happy family man to that of a drug dealer. "I became addicted to money. I never stopped to think about how I was throwing away my life. At any point, I could have been robbed or killed. It wasn't until later that I realized God was watching over me the whole time," said Toups.

The young people listening to Toups knew all too well about the stresses of

prison life and having incarcerated loved ones. G.R.A.C.E. Camp is uniquely designed to meet the needs of these children, who are often the forgotten victims of crime.

"These children have special problems and needs; the greatest of these is to know that they are loved. G.R.A.C.E. Camp is a place where they experience the love of God and God's people," said Rev. Lorris Wimberly, director for the camp, who has 30 years of camping experience.

That demonstration of love can sometimes flow from unique sources. Toups shared that a Christian group of inmates at the facility had contributed over \$3,900 in three years toward the operation of G.R.A.C.E. Camp.

The outpouring of love through donations and volunteer interaction sends important messages to these children. "These kids can feel like losers. Our

See G.R.A.C.E. Camp, page 2

G.R.A.C.E. Camp, *from page 1*

whole focus during camp is to build self esteem, and to help children have a vision of themselves as productive, competent people," said Becky Wimberly, co-director and wife of Lorris Wimberly.

Statistics have shown that children of incarcerated persons are more likely to end up in prison themselves if some intervention is not provided. G.R.A.C.E. Camp strives to break that negative cycle.

Through typical camping activities, like sports, music, crafts, games and worship, the 24 staff members provide individual attention and lots of "one-on-one" time to the campers.

"A lot of these children are very gifted artistically, and that type of talent often does not fit into our present academic system. For four days, we try to bring out these talents and gifts. The sense of accomplishment is very beneficial," said Becky Wimberly.

She added that staff members stress the development of social skills, such as listening and being courteous to others.

The brochure promoting G.R.A.C.E. Camp states, "During the week, they (campers) will be helped to recognize their self-worth, given opportunities for personal growth, and explore what it means to live as children of God."

G.R.A.C.E. Camp is in its third summer, with two camp sessions held in 2001. Plans for a third session next summer are well underway.

The children who attend the camp do so on scholarship. Due to the nature of the camp, it is more expensive to run than others that are comparable.

Help, by way of donations or volunteer hours, is needed from local churches, Sunday school classes, church groups and individuals. A "wish list" for G.R.A.C.E. Camp is published in this issue of New Gate, a newsletter for the Restorative Justice programs of the Louisiana conference.

For more information about G.R.A.C.E. Camp, Rev. Lorris and Becky Wimberly, 5470 Bayou Paul Rd., St. Gabriel, LA, 70776, (225) 642-3338.



Photos by Betty Backstrom

Volunteers are an integral part of the G.R.A.C.E. Camp experience. Above, Laura Wolf, John Jacobs and Paul N. Marshall. Below, Connie Cockerham, Hallique Dawson and Kristi Schutz. At left, camp counselors lead the youth in song.



Want to help meet the needs at G.R.A.C.E. Camp? Here's how

Cabin Needs:

Towels-bath 50, hand 25, washclothes 50
Travel size soaps 140, shampoos 140
Toothbrushes 140, toothpastes 140

Arts and Crafts Needs:

Poster board, plain, 11x14, 240
Finger paints and paper
Scissors, small blunt end, 50
Fabric for crafts
Markers, 40 sets

Personal Items needs:

Scrungies, barrettes, pony tail bands, headbands
Hair combs
Socks and underwear, various sizes
Everyday t-shirts, especially for boys
Insect repellent, pump spray
Sun screen and aloe vera after sun lotion

Outdoor Games needs:

Jump ropes, plastic, 140
Sidewalk chalk
Tubes, arm floaties, and rafts for swimming pool
Swim goggles for those allergic to chlorine
Bubbles, 140 small bottles

Indoor Games needs:

Board games, various ones beginner to intermediate
Jacks, metal with ball
Hula hoops

Miscellaneous:

Sun visors, 150
Birthday party hats, 150
Small embroidery kits for beginners, 40
Reams of white paper, 10
Mailing envelopes, 2 boxes of 500
Disposable plastic gloves, 2 boxes of 100
Plastic trash bags, 30-33 gal., 100
Plastic bags, tall kitchen can size, 2 rolls of 100
Ziploc bags, 2 boxes of sandwich size and quart size
Single subject notebooks, 150
Pocket folders, 150
Pencils, 300
Crayons, 150 boxes 16
Looseleaf paper, 150 packs of 200 sheets

Big Needs:

Golf cart
Volunteers to do laundry after camps
Music stands, 3
Walkie-talkies, 4

Use of a VHS video camera for each week of camp
Transportation needs:

Use of vans to bring children to camp and again at end of week to pick children up.
Also need one driver and one chaperone for each van.

Two each from New Orleans, Baton Rouge, Lake Charles, Shreveport, Monroe and Alexandria areas

Personnel needs:

One nurse or nurse practitioner at each event
One photographer
One personal care provider (includes doing some laundry as well as one-on-one companion as needed)

Scholarships:

Scholarships are \$200 per camper. Any amount given toward a scholarship is appreciated.

For more information or to help in other ways, contact Rev. John R. Johns at (318) 992-7347 or by e-mail at johns@centurytel.net.

Kairos Prison Ministry going strong after quarter century

Kairos Prison Ministry, an outreach for incarcerated persons, has now reached four continents. Throughout North America, England, Australia and South Africa, people who felt hopeless have found hope in Christ with this unique retreat program.

Kairos is now 25 years old, and has existed in Louisiana for the past years. Currently, there are programs at Angola Penitentiary, the Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women, Winn Correctional Facility and Wade Correctional Facility.

Two ministry weekends per year, combined with "booster" semi-annual retreats and follow-up weekly "share and prayer" groups, form the basis of the Kairos structure.

"This program takes the love of God into these institutions. Of course, the volunteers must leave after the weekend, so it is our hope to help set up Christian community within these facilities so that growth will continue. Kairos volunteers are meant to act as encouragers, not to form the bedrock of faith that must exist within the institution," explained Pam Kintner, Kairos volunteer.

Participants in the program are often invited from a list of names provided by

the prison chaplain. "We certainly welcome those who already have a faith life, but are very excited when leaders of the rougher elements in the prison take part in Kairos. These people have a natural talent for leadership, and it is our job to try to refocus those energies toward building Christian community," said Kintner.

People who are incarcerated live in a close community. When Kairos retreatants go back into the prison population, the evidence of spiritual change is often the most effective recruitment tool for future retreats.

"The sweet, attractive aroma of Christ lets others know that this person has got something special, something that fills a void. Prison is a lonely, isolated fearful world and there is a strong need for Christian community," Kintner added.

Each retreat serves close to 42 residents, with the help of 50-60 staff persons.

Women volunteers serve LCIW, and men volunteers at the all-male prisons. However, women may serve on support staff for men's Kairos, and men may do the same for LCIW.

Volunteers must have attended a



During Kairos weekend, volunteers throw a birthday party for incarcerated women.

qualifying weekend, such as Cursillo or Walk to Emmaus. Staff members agree to a year-long commitment to help support "prayer and share" groups that form after retreats.

"Kairos is more reminiscent of the

early church than any ministry I have ever found. It is truly making a difference in lives," said Kintner.

For more information, contact Kintner at 10315 Los Altos Dr., Shreveport, LA, 71115, (318) 798-0278.

Kairos Outside ministers to families of incarcerated people

"I had given up on God, but this weekend showed me that He still loves me. I have the courage to go on," wrote one young woman who had just attended a Kairos Outside event. Pat Rice, chairperson of the initiative's advisory council, shared the quote to demonstrate the power of the Kairos Outside experience for family members of incarcerated persons.

This life-changing program was started by a chaplain from San Quentin, California named Jo Chapman. Chapman had served on a Kairos prison ministry team, and discovered that family members of those incarcerated had great needs and were suffering too.

Chapman developed the manual for Kairos Outside and initiated the program over 10 years ago in California. Louisiana discovered the movement, and several years later, is preparing for Kairos Outside #5.

The three-day weekend is designed for female members of the families of incarcerated persons, or recently released prisoners.

"So often these women feel isolated because of the incarceration. They are shunned by friends, and even by members of their church. They are afraid to talk about the incarcerated family member for fear of losing their jobs. Kairos Outside is a totally safe place for them to come and completely release their



The Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women is one site of the Kairos Ministry.

thoughts and feelings with folks in a similar situation," said Rice. "During the weekend, they are assured that God loves them, no matter what their situation."

Kairos Outside is nondenominational, and a person does not have to be Christian to attend. Team members who plan and serve during each weekend must have participated in Kairos, Walk to Emmaus, Cursillo or similar event. The weekend is provided at no cost to all the guests.

At least two spiritual leaders serve on

staff, with the lead person being an ordained minister. Each team consists of 40-45 persons, with around 33 of the staff being women. "All staff members who work directly with the guests are women. Male volunteers on the team serve on the kitchen staff and help with entertainment. For some of these women, it may be the first time they have interacted with men in a positive way, as many have been abused or mistreated by their husbands or male family members. We are highly motivated to provide a feeling of spiritual, emotional

and physical safety throughout the weekend," said Rice.

One of the goals of the program is to encourage the formation of reunion groups after the weekend to provide continuing support. "We try to encourage former guests to serve on the team. Our ultimate goal is to have every weekend totally staffed by attendees," said Rice. There are currently two Kairos Outside weekends scheduled annually, with one in the fall and one in the spring. The next event is scheduled Oct. 5-7.

"Watching this program grow shows me how God's love for everybody can spread because when you give God's love away, those that receive it also want to give it away," claimed Rice.

"I have seen the difference this has made in the lives of the guests, and in the lives of those serving on staff. We have truly seen Christ in the faces of the people that we have served."

Louisiana Kairos Outside #5 will take place Oct. 5-7 at Camp Alabama in Sibley. Julie Culbertson will lead the program and begin team meetings Aug. 18 at Lakeview UMC in Shreveport. Kairos Outside #6 will be held March 22-24 at Camp Hardtner in Pollack led by Nanci Youngblood. For additional information, write to La. Kairos Outside, P.O. Box 29587, Shreveport, LA 71149-9587. Tax-deductible donations may be sent to the same address.

The United States is third in the world in incarceration. Louisiana incarcerates more people than any other state per 100,000 population. Louisiana incarcerates more people per 100,000 population than anywhere else in the world.

That somewhere close to three quarters of a million people are directly effected by crime in Louisiana.

We are building more prisons in spite of the fact that crime rates have gone down.

Eighty percent of all incarcerated people will get out of prison.

Almost every main character in the Bible committed a crime of some kind.

Did You Know?

That prison ministry was one of the most important ministries of John and Charles Wesley and early Methodists. That Jesus said those in the Kingdom of God would visit those in prison.

There is a prison near you.

Most churches in Louisiana have no ministry to those in the prison system.

People who have participated in a Kairos weekend have a return rate of 20-25% while the return rate for all prisoners is 75-80%.

Residents of Work Training Facility North and Avoyelles Correctional Center in Cottonport have given almost 23 scholarships for G.R.A.C.E. Camp.

First of twenty-one prison chapels soon to be dedicated

BY ANGELLA DEGRAVELLES

The Louisiana Prison Chapel Foundation (LPCF) has four chapels under construction at state prisons. The chapel at Avoyelles Correctional Center is expected to be the first to be completed in late fall. A formal blessing ceremony is currently being planned by members of the Avoyelles correctional staff, the Foundation, and others instrumental in making the chapel a reality.

Other chapels underway at Elayn Hunt Correctional Center and C. Paul Phelps Correctional Center are expected to be completed in late December. The fourth chapel, which began in early summer, should be ready for its first services in the spring, according to Charles Kleinpeter, DVM, president of the Foundation. LPCF board member, Sara Simmonds of Alexandria, represents the Louisiana Interchurch Conference and has worked extensively with the Methodist Conference in this fundraising effort. She is a member of First United Methodist Church of Alexandria.

The LPCF has raised the funds since the initial kick-off announcement some 18 months ago.

"We have individuals who have provided gifts from \$5 to over \$300,000. Many small gifts have been made in church collections at Sunday services. Every dollar counts and we are deeply moved by the generosity," said Dr. Kleinpeter.

He added that "not everyone can be a lay minister to inmates in our prisons but almost everyone can give." Dr.

Kleinpeter praised the Methodist Conference for its continuing work on behalf of the Foundation. He said a special offering would again be held in the spring in area Methodist churches.

The LPCF is a nonprofit ecumenical foundation formed to build interfaith chapels on the grounds of state prisons in Louisiana. Governor and Mrs. M. J. "Mike" Foster, Jr. are honorary co-chairs for the foundation and have made a personal donation to the effort.

The foundation will raise an additional \$6.5 million to construct 17 additional chapels at the other institutions. According to Governor and Mrs. Foster, worship and religious ministries in prison can have a profoundly positive impact on the stability of a prison and provide an opportunity for rehabilitation.

The Governor cited reports that show that only 14% of participants in organized Bible studies returned to prison in contrast to a recidivism rate of more than 40% for non-participants.

"Gifts from various religious denominations, individuals, and foundations are making it possible to move into the second phase of construction," said LPCF President Chat Kleinpeter, D.V.M. He said the next group of chapels to be constructed will include Dixon Correctional Institute, Louis Jetson Correctional Center, Washington Correctional Institute and Winn Correctional Center.

In the past, religious services at these prisons have been held in cafeterias, general assembly rooms and classrooms.



From the front gate of the Avoyelles Correctional Center in Cottonport, visitors can now see the new, soon to be dedicated, Grace Chapel, the first of 21 chapels to be completed on prison grounds throughout the state of Louisiana. The dedication and blessing of the facility is expected to be held in late fall.

Dr. Kleinpeter gave special recognition for the first phase efforts to the Louisiana Methodist Church Conference, the Archdiocese of New Orleans, Catholic Diocese of Baton Rouge, Catholic Diocese of Lake Charles, the Louisiana Baptist Convention, the Episcopal Church of Louisiana, and the Greater St. Stephen Full Gospel Baptist Church.

Each chapel utilizes a similar archi-

tectural design for optimal efficiency. The chapels include a chaplain's office, meeting rooms, Chancel/Altar space, Baptistry, and storage space.

The Louisiana Prison Chapel Foundation was formed for the purpose of raising funds to build or upgrade 21 interfaith chapels at Louisiana prisons. The phone number is (225) 931-3664. The web address is chapels.org.

Epiphany ministers to incarcerated youth

"Out of 200 young people who have attended an Epiphany weekend, only one to our knowledge has returned to a correctional facility," said Tom Capron in support of this exciting program for incarcerated youth.

Tom and his wife Marlene have been integrally involved in the Epiphany ministry since its inception in Louisiana in April of 1997. The program, which now extends into 12 states, got its start in Alabama with a manual written by Louise Johns.

The three-day weekend, which models the Kairos retreat, seeks to let troubled adolescents know that God loves them and forgives them.

The teens hear a series of eight talks throughout the weekend, discussing them with table "families" consisting of other teens and adult staff members. Prayer time, skits and other elements come together to build a carefully orchestrated weekend designed to bring renewal to the lives of these young people.

Each participant receives a cross made of twine by an inmate in Angola, who crafts each one individually by hand. During the weekend, the teens are referred to as "stars," in keeping with the constant positive reinforcement provided by the weekend.

The retreats now serve boys and girls at the Jetson Correctional Facility for Youth. Plans are in place for the first such retreat to be held in Monroe.

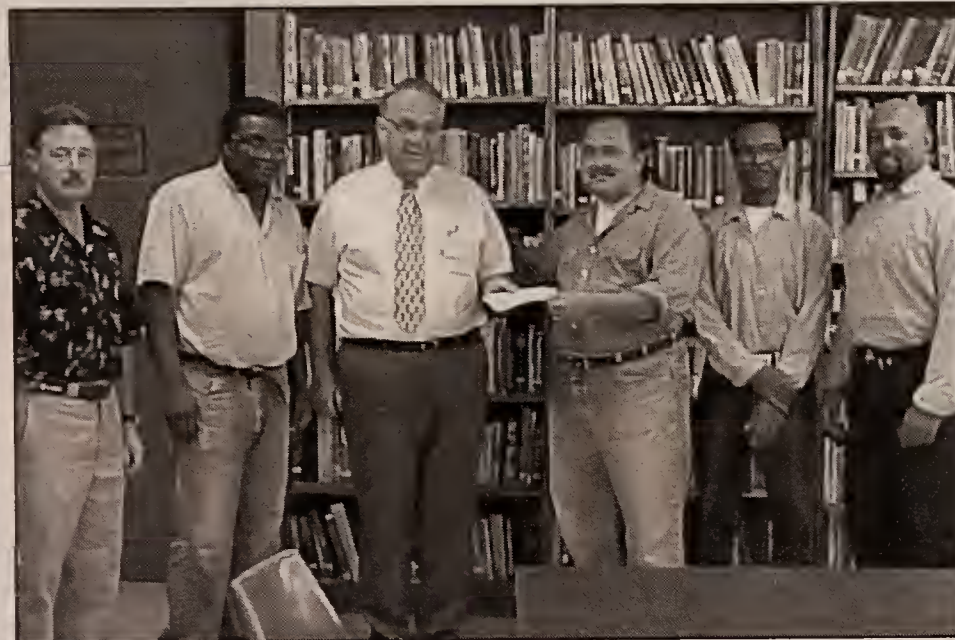
"With young people, it sometimes takes months, even years, to see the positive results from participating in Epiphany. One young lady, who had been in lock-down, is really starting to blossom three years after attending the retreat."

This year, a total of four Epiphany weekends will have been completed.

"With the young people, it sometimes takes months, even years to see the positive results that come from participating in Epiphany. One young lady, who had been in lock-down, is really starting to blossom three years after attending the retreat. She has recently been released from Jetson, and is returning on staff as one of our 'super-stars,'" said Capron.

A typical retreat serves 25 youth, and at least 30 volunteers are needed for staffing the weekend and followup mentoring. "Volunteering for this wonderful ministry is extremely important. You definitely receive more than you give."

For more information, contact Carol Spisak, 235 Eugenie Dr., Dusan, LA, 70529, (337) 981-5579.



Avoyelles inmates support G.R.A.C.E. Camp

Inmate organizations at Avoyelles Correctional Center in Cottonport donated \$1,250 in support of G.R.A.C.E. Camp. To help with a needs list for the camp, the Social Advancement Club, Amateur Officials Club, Boxing Club, and Inmate Welfare Committee made a collective contribution. Warden Baron Kaylo, at left, and representatives from each organization were present at the donation ceremony. Others were: James Burns, president of the Social Advancement Club; Rev. John R. Johns received the check on behalf of G.R.A.C.E. Camp; Ronny Ricard, secretary of the Amateurs Official Club/Boxing Club; Michael Theriot, president of the Boxing Club; and Anthony Broussard, president of the Amateurs Official Club.

At the presentation, Kaylo emphasized the importance of offender participation in community affairs and the role that such participation plays in the goals of Restorative Justice and the rehabilitative process. G.R.A.C.E. Camp is a retreat for children with incarcerated parents. Statistics show that these children are at a greater risk of becoming criminal offenders like their parents. G.R.A.C.E. Camp works to break that cycle by helping the children realize their self-worth.

World conference draws Methodists from around the globe

BRIGHTON, England (UMNS) – Egle Diedonyte had never seen such a large group of Methodists.

The young woman, who had been the first person baptized when Methodism was re-established in Lithuania in 1996 after a half-century of Soviet occupation, was excited by her warm welcome at the 18th World Methodist Conference.

"I am happy to be here," she said. "It encourages me."

Diedonyte, coordinator of youth ministries for the United Methodist Church in Lithuania, was among the many representatives of the denomination who joined brothers and sisters from other churches with Wesleyan roots at the conference.

Nearly 4,000 attended the July 25-31 event in Brighton, England. The World Methodist Council, with 77 member churches in 130 countries, sponsored the conference.

During the opening worship service, Frances Alguire of New Buffalo, Mich., who has served as the council's chairperson for the past five years, spoke about the challenge of discerning God's will at the beginning of the new millennium.

"Being a Christian in the 21st century is different from our grandparents' time, and, to those younger, from their great-grandparents' time," she told the gathering. "Teaching truth and morality and words of Scripture is still important, but in today's world it must be communicated with diverse cultural, ethnic and social groups."

The Rev. Eddie Fox of Nashville, Tenn., director of world evangelism, outlined the key ways in which the council conducts its witness for Jesus Christ.

"I love this church," Fox continued. "I want her to do more and be more in spreading the Gospel. Many people have no idea how extensive our ministry is, yet we're only touching the edge. The Methodist people are challenged to shed the light of Jesus everywhere – to provide healing hope to a world that desperately needs Jesus."

But some World Methodist Council members also are sensitive about how they work together. During a council meeting before the conference, United Methodist Bishop Walter Klaiber of Germany brought a proposal on behalf of the European Methodist Council,

expressing concern about Methodists who establish churches of their own connection in another country without consulting Methodist bodies already at work in the area.

Several South Africans expressed concern that the United Methodist Church has created congregations in their country without consultation.

After considerable discussion, the council endorsed the proposal to create a task force to produce a "manual of etiquette" among Methodist churches. It also requested that until the task force completes its work, churches should not start new congregations without the "courtesy of dialogue" with Methodist denominations already in the area.

To ensure continued funding for the council's work, a campaign for a \$20 million endowment fund was formally adopted. The Rev. William Quick of Detroit, who is directing the campaign, reported that 25 percent of that goal has been achieved, including pledges and cash gifts received during the meeting.

Don Fites of Peoria, Ill., chairperson of the endowment's steering committee, said the goal of the fundraising effort is to "translate John Wesley's 18th century vision of a 'world parish' into a 21st century reality."

"Unless we create a permanent endowment, the council will continue to live from hand-to-mouth," he added. He explained that in recent years the body has operated with a \$70,000 to \$100,000 annual deficit. "We couldn't have had this gathering without an appeal for individual gifts."

A call by the council's social and international affairs committee to invest the endowment only in companies using renewable energy sources became bogged down in debate and parliamentary confusion. Instead, a motion was approved directing the council's finance committee to develop a policy statement on ethical investments and to report to the next executive committee meeting.

In his last address as staff executive for the World Methodist Council, the Rev. Joe Hale, a United Methodist clergyman, pointed to the council's work involvement in evangelism, ecumenism and the promotion of peace as high points of his 25-year tenure.



Dr. Don Avery, Dr. Nancy Carruth and Ruston District Superintendent Rev. Jimmie Pyles were among the roughly 50 delegates and guests from the Louisiana Conference at the World Methodist Conference in Brighton, England. Pyles was elected to the executive committee of the World Methodist Council and Carruth was re-elected.



Photo by Rev. Andy Goff

Rev. Ann Sutton, Roszeta Norris, Rev. Leslie Norris, Wendy Norris and Scott Sutton also attended the gathering of Methodists from around the globe.



A UMNS Photo by Mike DuBose

Rev. Joe Hale was named a recipient of the World Methodist Peace Award, and Mary Hale received the council's Honorable Order of Jerusalem.

PIANIST POSITION

open at Westlake United Methodist Church

Starting salary \$7-9,000

depending on experience.

Call (337) 433-8424 for more info

FULL-TIME YOUTH DIRECTOR

Immediate opening at First United Methodist Church in Houma, La. for youth director working with grades 7-12. Bachelor's degree, 3 years experience, certified or working toward certification, organizational skills, spiritual depth/maturity, and UM background preferred. We are offering salary plus housing with utilities. Send resume and references to Judy Matherne, 708 Highland Dr., Houma, LA, 70364. (985) 879-1355.

US-2 missionaries discuss social issues at 50-Year celebration

Birmingham—With testimony, tears, worship, and song, some 20 former and current US-2 missionaries gathered here to share stories of crossing boundaries, expanding horizons, and confronting some of the “isms” that afflict American society.

The Aug. 2-5 gathering was a joyous and prayerful celebration of the 50 years of service of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries US-2 missionary program. Worship was led by the Rev. Tex Sample of Phoenix, professor emeritus of Saint Paul School of Theology and coordinator of the Network for the Study of U.S. Lifestyles, and the Rev. William B. McCain, the Mary Elizabeth McGee Joyce Chair in Preaching at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C.

The US-2 program came into being in 1951 as a way of allowing young men and women to answer the gospel call to service and to develop leadership skills. To date, more than 1,300 young adults between the ages of 20 and 30 have served in U.S.-based programs as US-2s.

In welcoming the group to Alabama, Bishop Robert E. Fannin said, he is convinced that the only way the church will grow is through the “one-to-one contact” encouraged by the US-2 program.

That kind of contact was highlighted throughout the gathering as current and former US-2s talked about the ways in which the program has taken them out of their worlds and into the worlds of people with whom they might never have had contact under ordinary circumstances.

Sheila McCurdy, US-2 Class of 1996-1998, grew up in Montgomery, Ala., during the turbulence of the civil rights movement. She saw first-hand the struggle for life and justice in the midst of death.

Witnessing as a panelist at the gathering's social justice forum, McCurdy recounted her search for a faithful way

to participate in a movement that ultimately would change Alabama and the nation. The search led her to the US-2 program and eventually to a mission assignment in inner city Newark, N.J. Her experiences there would forever change the way she viewed her country.

McCurdy said she watched a child die in its mother's arms because the hospital demanded that she and the child's mother complete several forms before the child could be treated.

“I realized that day that little girls didn't just die in Birmingham, but little girls were dying all over this country just because they were black or because they were on welfare,” McCurdy said.

McCurdy said she could not sing the civil rights anthem, “We shall Overcome,” as a thing of the past because I know that my two children, who are African-American, do not have the privilege that I have because of my white skin. This has to become a country where they do have that privilege.”

McCurdy now is pastor of the United Methodist Church in Baltimore County. She also is co-president of the Methodist Federation for Social Action.

The search for a way to connect one on one in ministry, to raise the level of awareness and to engage in dialogue around issues of social justice is central to the US-2 program. In remarks at the opening of the celebration, Dr. Randolph Nugent, general secretary of the Board of Global Ministries, said US-2s have always “sought the heights.” The difference he said, is that they seek it “not for themselves, but for others.”

And indeed it was a desire to share her gifts and graces that took Joanne Reich from her home in suburban New



Seventeen US-2 missionaries were recently commissioned for 2001-2003.

Jersey to rural Georgia in 1988. She was seeking a way to serve the church, but couldn't quite see how her US-2 assignment as a bookkeeper would translate into a ministry. As it turned out, her talents in finance were just what some employees of the community institution where she was assigned needed.

In the course of handling the employee benefits, Reich, of the Class of 1988-1990, realized that many of the African-American staff were working full-time but were not signed up for employee benefits.

The problem was illiteracy. She recalled that other staff simply said, “Well, if they don't fill out the papers they must not be interested.”

Unwilling to leave it at that, Reich set up a one-on-one clinic in her office to help individuals, mostly black, poor, and desperately in need of health and other benefits, fill out forms and gain access to all that they were entitled to. That experience, she said, affirmed the church's belief that she could be an effective advocate for social justice no matter what her area of specialty.

Following her two years as a US-2 missionary, Reich became a Global Ministries mission intern assigned to the Middle East. She now is a staff member at the Board of Global Ministries and president of the church's National Association of Deaconesses and Missionaries.

Spanish radio spots to be aired during Igniting Ministry

During September, which has been declared Open House Month by the Conference, United Methodist radio spots produced in Spanish will be airing on the program produced and aired on a New Orleans radio station as part of our Hispanic Ministry.

The ministry is thriving under the direction of two missionary pastors assigned through the General Board of Global Ministries. Rev. Samuel Calvo and his daughter-in-law Mirabel Mojica Calvo head the program which seeks to serve the needs of the Hispanic population of the New Orleans area.

Mirabel Calvo, a native of Brazil, serves as chief Hispanic ministry consultant. Sam Calvo is the former head of the Costa Rican Methodist church. Another key leader is Peter Aguila, chairperson of the Louisiana Conference Hispanic ministry task force.

This thriving ministry is truly a family affair, with Sam's wife Sarai Calvo working as a Spanish teacher for those serving the ministry. Sarai was formerly a teacher in Costa Rica.

Rev. Calvo, who currently serves as pastor of El Messias ministry at Messiah United Methodist Church, has helped to

“If a volunteer does not speak Spanish, we have tutors to help them learn the language. We particularly need assistance from persons in the health professions.”

develop and maintain steady growth in the church. Sarai, in addition to teaching Spanish, serves as the Community Outreach Director for the ministry.

It is standard fare to see a minimum of 40 visitors per Sunday from across metropolitan New Orleans at El Messias.

The keystone of the Hispanic ministry is the community school, which houses GED classes given in Spanish. ESL (English as a Second Language) classes are also taught in keeping with the ministry's objective of helping Hispanic persons acclimate to life in the United States. William and Betty Rowell of First UMC, Kenner have been dedicated to teaching those classes.

The ministry also offers GED classes in English, U.S. citizenship classes, and assistance with immigration issues.

“Those classes have grown astronomically due to the popularity of the radio broadcast,” said Rev. Alonzo Campbell, director of Special Ministries for the conference. “We currently need additional volunteers to transport people, teach ESL classes, translate, serve as intake workers and assist with health fairs. If a volunteer does not speak Spanish, we have tutors to help them learn the language. We particularly need assistance from persons in the health professions.” The Advance Special number for Hispanic Ministry is 4423.

The Advance Special is a major component for continuing the ministry because in 2002, a grant from GBGM, as part of the National Hispanic Plan Grant, will expire.

“Financial support of this ministry is critical to its success. Messiah UMC already contributes, and when the majority of persons being served work minimum wage jobs, the funding base is significantly lower. When you don't speak primary language, opportunities decrease dramatically,” said Campbell.

Mallard to speak in BR

Dr. Bill Mallard of Candler School of Theology, Emory University, will present a series of lectures on “Christ and the Spirit in Luke-Acts” at University United Methodist Church in Baton Rouge Sept. 9-10.

On Sunday, Sept. 9, he will preach at the 8:30 and 11 a.m. services, with a sermon entitled “Forgiven,” based on Luke 7:36-50. At the 9:45 Sunday School hour, his lecture is entitled “A Nameless Saint,” a study of Luke 10:25-37.

Evening studies begin at 7 p.m. Sunday evening's topic is “The Church and the Spirit at Pentecost,” based on Acts 2:1-21. Monday evening he will present “Resurrection and Hope,” from Luke 24:36-45.

On Monday at 11 a.m., Mallard will have a special session for clergy, followed by lunch and conversation. Please call (225) 344-0343 for reservations. Mallard is renowned for his keen insight, humor, and engaging teaching style. University Church is located at 3350 Dalrymple Drive in Baton Rouge. For more information, call 225-344-0343.



Alexandria churches join to make dream of Buddy Camp a reality

BY MIRIAM BROWN
DISTRICT COMMUNICATION ADVISOR

What brings together children of all ages, sizes, shapes, and abilities with youth and adults and animals? Buddy Camp, 2001 — the summer camp for everyone! For two years First United Methodist and Newman United Methodist in Alexandria have worked together to offer a very special camping experience for pairs of specially developing children and normally developing children.

Stacey Debevec, of the Pediatric Therapy Clinic in Alexandria, dreamed of creating a summer day-camp in which normally developing children would become "buddies" with specially developing children through art, music, games and swimming. Stacey's idea was that this day camp would give children with some type of disability a better understanding of how to manage in a fast-paced world.

When Stacey brought her idea to several committees within her church, she ignited among fellow church members a desire to move in an energetic, creative way to offer something very different and wonderful to the entire community. First United Methodist made contact with Newman, seeking their assistance on the project and all components of the plan began to fall into place.

In the spring of the year applications are distributed through the school system and are reviewed on a "first-come, first-served" basis. Thirty specially developing children are selected and paired up with thirty normally developing children who will become their "camp buddies" for the week. Each buddy pair is assigned to two youth counselors who have been chosen through an application process.

The "buddy groups" are then given "Buddy Moms or Dads" who supervise the art activities, swimming, outdoor recreation and music from 7:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Another blessing, which has come with the camp, has been through the community of Alexandria responding graciously with donations of supplies, food, and money.

Buddy Camp has not only made a



Buddy Camp counselor Jeremy Earthly, center, mugs for the camera with campers Steven Monroe and Brandon Leonard.

tremendous impact on the campers and members of First United Methodist and Newman who are directly involved in the planning and activities, but also on the

two church congregations.

These churches have come together along with community participants to make this dream a reality.

Wesley UMC holds kids' summer program



A summer program designed to enhance the spiritual lives, as well as the educational skills of the young people in our church and the community was designed by Wesley UMC Director of Children's Ministry Program, Mary Blade and set in motion in the summer of 2000.

In the spring of the second year of this program the minister, program director and District Missioner, Richard Bushnell met several times to discuss ways it could be presented again.

The Children's Ministry applied for a Sams' Grant through the General Board of Global Ministries in hopes that it would help fund the program, because we are a small church family and funds are limited, but the efforts to obtain a grant were denied. We

prayed for a blessing and asked God to enlighten us with some new ideas. For encouragement to continue the work on this project we recalled the scriptures (Habakkuk 2:2-4), which states "Write the Vision down...Make it Plain...though it tarries, wait for it."

Summer vacation was fast approaching and the plans had been made. Even without funding, with the support of the pastor, the district missioner, and our District Superintendent, William Youngblood, our program took off with a blast and was a big success for all, because we remembered Habakkuk 2:4, "that the just shall live by his faith."

We believe God had a plan of his own for this program, because from the beginning things seemed to happen in a very blessed way.

First UMC, Pineville, donates to G.R.A.C.E. Camp



Members of the United Methodist Women at First UMC, Pineville, display some of the supplies they collected recently for G.R.A.C.E. Camp.

A presentation by Peggy Johns on G.R.A.C.E. Camp, a resident camp held for children of incarcerated persons, challenged the unit of United Methodist Women at First United Methodist Church in Pineville to donate funds and arts and craft supplies to the project as a plan of action following completion of the study "Mission in the 21st century."

Unknown to the Pineville unit, another challenge was given to a young woman, Amy Williams, a former member who now lives in Georgia. Her pastor preached a "mission sermon" and gave each person present an envelope containing money. He challenged each of those persons to match the amount received and give it to some special mission project of their choice. Amy had

just learned about G.R.A.C.E. Camp here in Louisiana and chose to add her mission money to that collected by the Pineville unit for their special needs group. A total of \$267.50, as well as many art and craft supplies, was sent to help with the summer camp program.

Send your church's stories to the District Communication Advisor:

Miriam Brown
3200 Messina Rd.
Boyce, LA 71409
(318) 445-9035

St. Timothy kicks off Ultimate Goal Soccer ministry

BY JAN CLARKE

For far too long, soccer moms and dads have voiced a common complaint - soccer tournaments take up an entire weekend, including Sunday worship service time.

A group of parents at St. Timothy United Methodist Church in Mandeville kicked the soccer vs. church debate around enough times to finally score a solution. It's called Ultimate Goal Soccer Ministry and the focus is to bring a Christian non-denominational worship service to the soccer field.

At an April state playoff soccer tournament at Pelican Park near Mandeville, the kickoff of the first on-site worship services scored a unique spiritual win for over 200 team players, their coaches and parents attending the two open air services.

Gathered near the soccer fields where games were underway, the young athletes and their adult supporters sat on the grass or in lawn chairs to listen, pray and sing during one of two 30-minute services held April 29.

After opening the 10 a.m. service with prayer, one of the ministry organizers Chris Fryou explained the Ultimate Goal game plan. "We're just a group of soccer parents who got tired of missing church on the Sunday mornings during tournaments," he said. "We want to try to bring church to the soccer field."

He made it clear that the soccer services were not designed to replace regular church attendance. "We encourage everyone to go to the church of their choice," he said, "but if you're at a soccer tournament and you miss church, we're here."

Giving the devotional message was Bonnie Otilio, a former Mandeville High School girls' soccer stand-out and active member of St. Timothy's youth and college group. Otilio is also the current goalie on the LSU women's team and was named MVP for the year holding the current record in the Southeastern Conference for saves and shut outs.

"I don't know what's in my future, but I know God's in my future," said Otilio paraphrasing Proverbs 16:9. She recounted her lonely and nervous feelings of being on one end of a soccer field all alone in the goal box.

"I'd say a little prayer, 'God, don't let them score on me now.' Even if they did, I knew that God was standing by me and helping me keep my head up to try harder next time," said Otilio to an attentive group of players under the age of 11 who would have the chance to try harder in the next big game just minutes away.

The collegiate goalie described the process of growing both on the field and in her faith. "I found that I grew as a goal keeper at the same time I grew in my relationship with Christ," she said. "It's great to do what you love and be able to spread God's love at the same time."

Kids asked her if she got nervous, coaches asked her how to get their goalies to come off the line, and moms asked her if she had trouble maintaining her faith through her teen years. Wearing her LSU shirt with the motto "attitude is everything", Otilio answered with straightforward, honest and even humorous replies.

Guitarists Matt Gatto and Corey O'Quin also from St. Timothy, strummed the familiar chords to "Lord I Lift Your Name On High" and led vocals as many singers performed the hand gestures on the chorus and clapped to the rhythm.

As the service ended, organizers called for any like-minded people to volunteer to conduct similar services at future meets. "We are not bound by city, state or sport," Fryou said. "We want to grow this ministry for God."

Another organizer, Pattye Hewitt, suggested that the title of the organization could be changed without changing the initials, from Ultimate Goal Soccer Ministry to Ultimate Goal Sports Ministry, if the demand beyond soccer became apparent. Swimming and baseball competitions were suggested as



Bonnie Otilio and Bill Dean lead participants in the newly established Ultimate Goal Soccer Ministry, which helps bring worship to families with game conflicts on Sundays.

future sites of worship services.

Although the founding group of parents are all from St. Timothy, the ministry vision is to offer non-denominational devotional services run by soccer parent volunteers all across the state.

To volunteer or support the sports ministry program, contact Jimmy Hewitt at (985) 626-4853, Chris Fryou at (985) 809-7361, or Bill Dean at (985) 674-1436; or by e-mail at info@ugsm.org and web site is www.UGSM.org.

Fall Convocation
A Celebration of Fun, Fellowship, and Worship

JESUS FREAKS
Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God — what is good and acceptable and perfect. Romans 12:2

September 29th, 2001
10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.

Music and Concert provided by: **Wayne Kerr**
Preaching by: **Rev. Darlene Moore-James**
Pastor of Hartzell Mt. Zion UMC in Slidell

igniting MINISTRY

North Shore District
Missioner Sarah Willis
makes a presentation on the
igniting Ministry campaign
at First United Methodist
Church in Ponchatoula.

A photograph of Missioner Sarah Willis, a woman with short blonde hair, standing at a podium and speaking. Behind her is a large banner with the "igniting MINISTRY" logo and text.

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September 14, 2001

Laity Sunday to focus on ‘Partners in Ministry’ in October

BY DR. ANITA CRUMP
CONFERENCE LAY LEADER

All local church lay leaders are requested and encouraged to work with their pastors to observe Laity Sunday in their local churches on Sunday, Oct. 21. Tim Moss, director of Lay Work for the General Board of Discipleship, announced that the theme for this year’s Laity Sunday is “Partners In Ministry-All God’s People Setting the Table.”

This theme’s implication is that of preparedness. “Setting the Table” means



Crump

preparing specifically for guests. During the month of September, we will be conducting “open house” in all of our United Methodist churches.

Our local television channels and billboards will be having ads which will invite people to our churches. It is my firm belief that these ads are going to bring

some strangers into our churches. Are we going to be prepared? Will we be able to recognize and welcome all those who will come? Will we be prepared to follow up on their visits?

The mission of our church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ. There are four steps that we must follow. First, we are to reach out and receive people into the Body of Christ. Second, we are to lead persons to commit their lives to God

See Laity Sunday, page 7

INSIDE

On the Journey /2

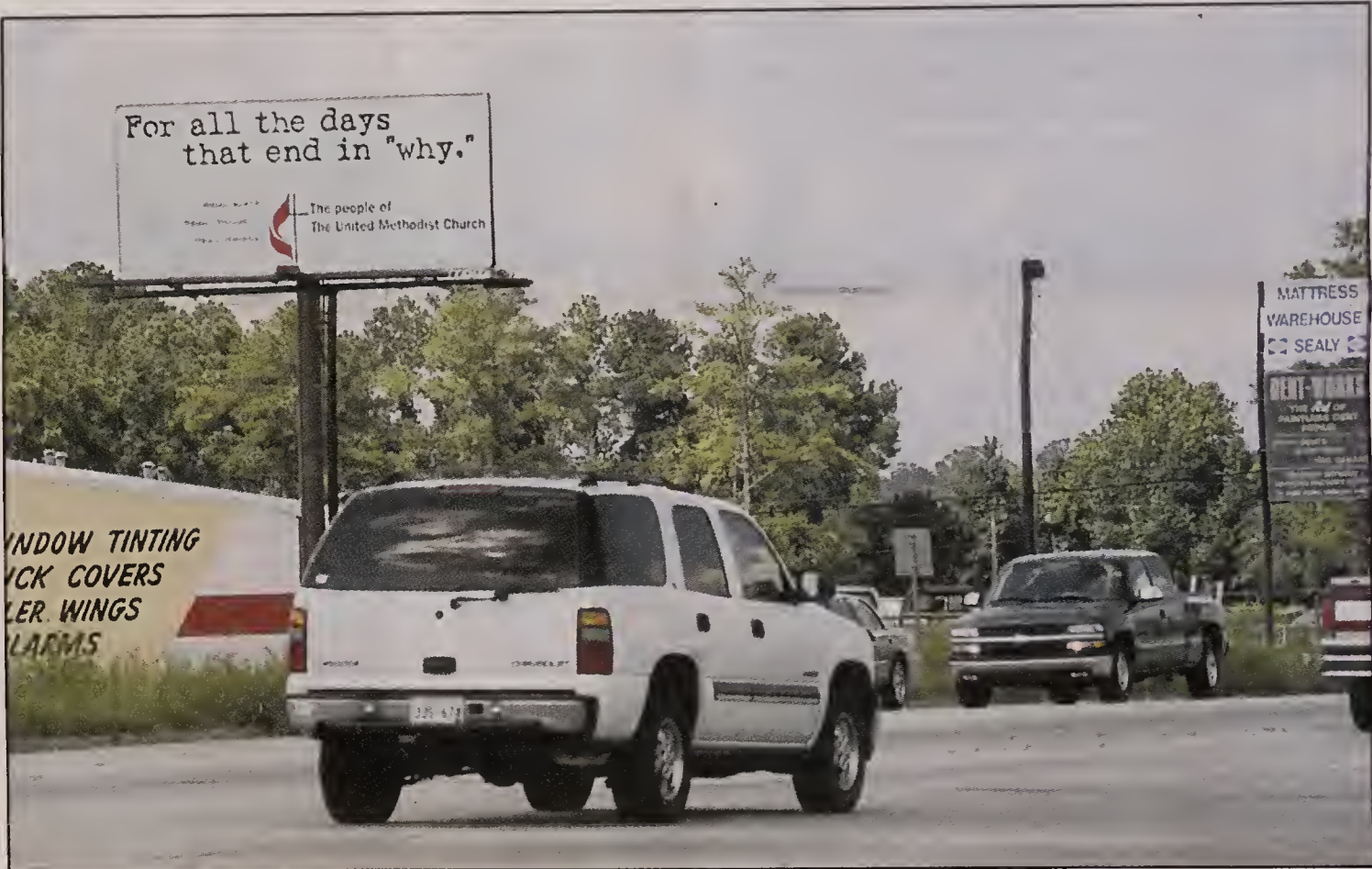


Bishop Hutchinson visits Far East /2



Global Justice volunteers /7

- Acadiana District /4
- Baton Rouge District /5



Photos by Joshua Lewis



Signs of Igniting Ministry

One of the 61 billboards in a Conference-wide buy features the “Rain” expression from the Igniting Ministry campaign. “Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors” is the message proclaimed on a sign in the front yard of a member of First United Methodist Church, Baton Rouge. Local churches are encouraged to log on and check out the “Find-a-Church” information about their congregations (<http://www.united-methodist.org>). Information may be updated or expanded by following a link located on the bottom of the “Find-a-Church” results pages.

ON THE JOURNEY

I Hate Being Tailgated

I really hate being tailgated! There is nothing worse than to have some frustrated driver in one of those little cars pull in behind me with their lights on and stay about five feet from my rear bumper. They drive as if they will run into me if I don't move over and let them pass. I can just feel the anxiety building in the one behind the wheel of the pursuing car, and I can certainly feel the anger building in myself! I guess we are both experiencing some form of road rage at that point!

I have several reactions to these impertinent and pushy drivers. First of all I want to slow down (and sometimes do!) just to frustrate the one pushing from behind to let them know that I am going fast enough and so are they! But I have learned that doesn't accomplish much.

Or I want to stop all traffic, pull everyone over to a council table, and sit and talk this whole phenomenon through. You know – "Why do you feel you have to drive so carelessly and fiercely? Why do you feel you have to run right up on the back of my vehicle and act as if you are the only person on the highway? Why do you feel you have the right to endanger everyone else simply because you think you have the right to act as you please?" Do you think I would get anywhere if I just counseled some of these road hazards? Undoubtedly they would have a good and instructive word for me as well!

Sometimes I just want to slam on the brakes, let the so & so run smack into me, and then let them pay for the damages. Maybe they will get a little bump on their forehead in the process and that will knock a little good sense into them as well! But what good would an intentional accident do?

So, I just drive along looking in my rear view mirror and when I see one of those menacing vehicles darting in and out of traffic behind me I just brace myself to be angry at them and pull over to another lane to let them by me (that is if they don't whip around to my right side before I have a chance to pull over!). This resignation to the hazards of the road has helped my blood pressure some and has also made me a little more friendly to Dodge Neons (this must be the vehicle of choice for anyone who wants to be a road hazard!), Toyota Camrys, Honda Civics and the like. Of course there is the occasional Ford Explorer and Chevrolet Suburban that gets in the fray, but most of the drivers who want to drive like a bat out of wherever seem to prefer small cars it seems!



Bishop William W. Hutchinson

"I think the angry 'drivers' rushing up behind the slow moving church are saying they want us to know they think we are not relevant. And maybe they are right in some ways. That's why I want to pull everyone over to the counseling table and talk this through."

Maybe one of the reasons this whole scene is so exasperating is because we are facing much of the same phenomenon in the church. There are many Christians today who are really pushing for some slow moving congregations and slow moving leaders to move over and let a faster image pass! And they aren't subtle about it at all. In fact, they are downright pushy. But maybe they have to be that way! Some of us "old timers" are out on a Sunday drive and we're hogging the roads and won't let the newer

ideas pass us. And after all, isn't that why we now have super highways, so they will carry more traffic and let the faster moving vehicles go on around us with some sense of safety? Is it the place of the older geezers like me to slow them down? Teach them some necessary road etiquette maybe, but I'm not sure it's my place to slow them down.

I think the angry drivers that seem to be rushing up behind the slow moving church are saying they want us to know they think we are not relevant. And maybe they are right in some ways. That's why I want to pull everyone over to the counseling table and sit and talk this through. The fast vehicles have a point to make. They probably need to share their frustrations. Slower drivers have a point as well. They need to tell their story of why they drive as they do. But no one will understand anyone else unless we talk about it!

And what good would it do to slam on the brakes in front of those who want to pass? It would only cause a collision that would do great damage to both vehicles. We don't need a collision. We need an understanding!

The next time I am in traffic and I see that crazy little red car coming at me from behind I'm going to think about something other than how angry that makes me. I'm going to think about the church of Jesus Christ and how we need to be moving on down the road and we need to take all the drivers with us. Maybe that's the topic for a serious discussion in every church. It's all part of the journey on the highway to heaven!

In Christ's love,

Bill Hutchinson

Hutchinson, two other bishops, travel to Cambodia and Vietnam



Bishop William W. Hutchinson and his wife, Kay, recently toured Cambodia and Vietnam with Bishop Bruce Ough of the West Ohio Conference and Bishop Larry Goodpaster of the Alabama-West Florida Conference, above kneeling. Above, standing at left are the pastor and his wife of Korgi United Methodist Church in Cambodia. Below: Kay Hutchinson with students and the pastor's wife from the church. Bishop Hutchinson will report on his experience in the two countries in his upcoming columns in *Louisiana Now!*



Women's silent retreat set for Sept. 30

"Hungering for God," a silent retreat for women, will be held Sept. 30-Oct. 3 at the Conference Center in Woodworth, La.

Sponsored by The Academy for Spiritual Leadership, the retreat will focus on meditation, journaling, worship and prayer.

The labyrinth and one-on-one meetings with a spiritual director are available for participants.

Rev. Jayne Trammell-Kelly, Rev. Ellen R. Alston, Rev. Sandi Huber, Betty Jeanne

Cayton and Cherri Johnson will serve as retreat leaders for the weekend.

Participants are asked to bring a Bible, a journal and the book "God Hunger: Discovering the Mystic in All of Us."

The retreat costs \$220 per person, which includes a private room for three nights, registration fee and meals. Registration forms may be obtained from every District office throughout the Conference. Deadline for registration is Sept. 20.

Louisiana pastor joins celebration of national Black College Fund

BY LINDA GREEN

ORANGEBURG, S.C. (UMNS) — Twenty years ago, Teresa Martin-Major's eyes were opened, and she drew new meaning from the song "How Great Thou Art."

It was the summer of 1981, and Martin-Major, a business administration student at Bethune-Cookman College in Daytona Beach, Fla., embarked on a journey that would change her life. As one of the first two interns in the Black College Fund Summer Itineration Program, she spent 10 weeks interpreting and promoting the fund and the church-related historically black colleges to annual conferences in the northeast.

"I came from flatlands, and traveling on the highways I was exposed to a totally different environment," she said. "I could hear birds singing and see the beautiful woods. All of this gave new meaning to 'How Great Thou Art' because of all I had witnessed those weeks."

She was the first of a long line — 112 and counting — of what are now known as Lina H. McCord summer interns. Today, she teaches fifth-grade math and adult education in Dade County, Fla.

Martin-Major recalled those early days as she and 30 other veteran and recent Lina H. McCord interns met at United Methodist-related Claflin University. The June 22-24 reunion marked the 20th anniversary of the program.

The United Methodist Church created the Black College Fund in 1972, placing a high priority on helping its 11 historically black colleges and universities fulfill their mission through regular apportioned support. The fund supplements the schools' operational and capital needs. It originally supported 12 church-related black colleges until Morristown (Tenn.) Junior College merged with Knoxville (Tenn.) College, a Presbyterian USA-related institution, in 1989.

One of the key factors about the Black College Fund is that it is a church apportionment, said the Rev. Darlene Moore-James, a 1985 intern. "For me to go and speak as a living voice to groups of people made it personal and real and impacted people to say, 'This is something that my money is going toward.' It's a living testimony to what we give and how it can make a difference."

Moore-James would like to see all 65 U.S. annual conferences pay 100 percent of their apportionments to the fund, which she views as the lifeblood of the denomination's 11 historically black schools. "The black colleges and universities are still just as important today as they ever were. They are not only a legacy but they have a greater vision for the future. If the entire effort is supported, the whole church and community is rewarded."

Over the years, the Black College Fund office in Nashville, Tenn., has received inquiries about former interns and ambassadors. The reunion afforded a moment to celebrate the accomplishments made by the interns and ambassadors, Capers said.

Her office is planning a 20-year pictorial directory of the 112 interns and ambassadors to answer those "where are they now" questions. A speaker's bureau consisting of all interns is also being developed.

Capers said that the office has found that most of the 112 interns entered the ordained ministry, or became teachers or successful business people, and have made contributions to their communities, the church and the world.

Martin-Major said numerous people have told her that she is being called to ordained ministry. "I don't know. I might be running from it. I like to serve and motivate people. I like to bless someone's life. Every time I feel as if I've blessed someone, I see a blessing in my life. It is



UMNS photo

Rev. Darlene Moore-James, left, pastor of Hartzell Mt. Zion United Methodist Church in Slidell recently attended a reunion of interns from the Black College Fund. The fund is a "living testimony to what we give and how it can make a difference," she said.

just a wonderful and spiritual cycle."

One of her goals is to pursue a career in some type of ministry, she said. "I do not know what it will be. I am waiting on the Lord to guide me on that."

The itineration process helped Moore-James explore her call to ordained ministry. The Dillard University and Gammon Theological Seminary graduate is the pastor of Hartzell Mt. Zion United Methodist Church in Slidell, La. The internship, the Black College Fund and Dillard University made a tremendous impact on her life during her 10-week itineration.

Moore-James grew up in the small town of Mandeville, La., and attended Newell United Methodist Church. To attend Dillard University, "you needed not only a prayer and a made-up mind but also some provisions," she said.

Her family could not afford the entire tuition, so her church family stepped in, and she learned about the Black College Fund. "The scholarship and the stipend from the intern program definitely afforded me the opportunity to finish and go to seminary," she said.

Moore-James said she knew she had received the call to ordained ministry and "this program taught me what it meant to be an advocate for something you really believed in."

For more information about the Black College Fund and the Lina H. McCord Summer Intern Program, contact the Rev. Joreatha M. Capers, Black College Fund Office, United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry, P.O. Box 340007, Nashville, TN 37203-0007; phone: (615) 340-7378; e-mail: jcapers@gbhem.org.

Academy for Spiritual Leadership starts new year for faith explorers

The Academy for Spiritual Leadership will be starting its fourth year with the first retreat on October 11-13. Track One is a series of four retreats that give people a safe place to grow in their faith and explore where God is leading them in the future.

All of the retreats are based on themes that deepen our awareness as Spiritual Leaders: Connecting to our Calling, Connecting to our Souls, Connecting to the Church and Community, and Connecting to our Faith Journey. The retreat leaders include Dr. Ed Sylvest, a seasoned professor at Perkins School of Theology; Rev. Wendy Miller, who created the training in Spiritual Direction at Eastern Mennonite Seminary in Harrisonburg, VA; Dr. Emanuel Cleaver, the pastor of St. James UMC and former mayor of St. Paul, Kansas City, Missouri; and Rev. Howard Hanger, a jazz musician and pastor of Jubilee Community in Asheville, NC.

Space is still available for persons to apply. We are seeking persons who have a passion to participate in a life-changing process that deals with growth as a spiritual leader in their local church, vocation, or ministry setting. Track One is open to sixty participants and is made up of both laity and clergy from across the Louisiana Conference.

All of the retreats are held at the Conference Center in Woodworth, La. The registration fee for all four of the retreats is \$300 and can be paid half in 2001 and half in 2002. There are a limited number of scholarships available upon request. Seven continuing education units are given for Track One by the Academy.

If you feel drawn to be a part of this life changing venture of the Academy contact the director:

Rev. Carole Cotton Winn, 101 Byron Ct. Slidell, La. 7046: (985) 639-9531, ccottonwinn@msn.com.

Bishop to host first annual golf tournament

The Sprint PCS® Bishop's Conference Center Golf Tournament is scheduled for Monday, Oct. 8 at the Alexandria Country Club. The format of the tournament is a four-person team scramble with shotgun start at 10 a.m.

Teams may enter for a fee of \$600, individuals may play for \$150. The cost includes greens fees, driving range fees, cart rental, shirt, lunch and refresh-

ments. Golf attire and soft spikes are required.

A "bed and breakfast" package is available for those wishing to stay at the Conference Center on Sunday evening.

Hole sponsorships are available, and more facts about sponsorship opportunities or additional tournament information may be obtained by calling Cathy Wimberley at (318) 449-4500.

Golf Tournament Registration Form

Entry Fee/Course

\$600 per team/\$150 per person. Includes greens fees, driving range fees, cart rental, shirt, lunch and refreshments.

Name: _____ Handicap: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: () _____ Fax: () _____

Checks payable to: Louisiana Conference Center
2350 Methodist Parkway, Woodworth, LA 71485



Mason UMC youth awarded scholarship

Desi Rae Valentine, honor graduate of Morgan City High School (MCHS), is the recipient of the Dillard University Presidential Scholars four year scholarship.

This award will enable her to pursue a pre-med major in preparation for a career as an anesthesiologist.

The daughter of Donald and Nettie Valentine, Desi Rae ranked third in her



Valentine

graduating class and was awarded the Principal's Leadership Award, the Delores Ortiz Health Occupations Scholarship, as well as surpassing requirements for the Louisiana TOPS scholarship.

She served her fellow students at MCHS as Executive Vice-president of the Student Council, Secretary of the National Honor Society, and was a member of Mu Sigma, Key Club, and Live Savers. In addition to being listed in Who's Who Among American High School Students, she was voted Most Likely To Succeed by her class mates.

Briggs UMC leads village of Mouton Cove

Three years of prayer, effort, and faith came together around the affirmation that, "It takes a village to raise a child." To some the phrase may be a cliché, but to United Methodist folk in the village of Mouton Cove, it is gospel.

Feeling called to a Vacation Bible School ministry with children in the heart of the African-American community in Abbeville, the congregation had to overcome a number of obstacles in the path to this ministry: first, Briggs United Methodist Church is located in Mouton Cove, ten minutes beyond the Abbeville city limits; second, they had no facility in Abbeville to house the school; and, third, human and financial resources were slim.

Prayer... Pastor Emmett Collins and the Briggs congregation prayed until the proverb, "It takes a village..." broke open anew for them.

They took the Jesus Junction Vacation Bible School idea to the whole village. Pleasant Green Baptist Church in Abbeville agreed to host the school.

Faith Hope Missionary Baptist

Church, Macedonia Baptist Church, and St. Mary Congregational Church joined in with commitments for teaching, feeding, cleaning, and anything else needed to make sure Jesus Junction Vacation Bible School was a success.

The school was opened to everyone from "Pre-K" kids to adults. The attendance averaged over 110 people per day for classes in crafts, mission, music, and Bible stories. Under the leadership of the Holy Spirit and directors Jennie and Elbert Dawson, the guided tour around God's great commandment, "You shall love God with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself," was a powerful and positive experience in the lives of all involved.

As they say at Briggs United Methodist Church, "We may not be in the heart of Abbeville, but Abbeville will always be in our hearts." Our doors are open in Mouton Cove. We can do all things with God as the Master.



Briggs Chapel United Methodist Church recently conducted the 'Jesus Junction' Vacation Bible School in an ecumenical effort with other area churches. An average of 110 people of all ages from the community attended each class. Topics ranged from crafts, mission and music to Bible stories. The staff of Jesus Junction, above, was Al Wilson, Elbert Dawson, director, Kay Wilson, and Charles Hill.



"Sidewalk in Bloom" is an afternoon and summer tutoring program for the Azalea Park Neighborhood in Lafayette.

Asbury United Methodist Church is using this most needed project as one of their many outreaches in our community. Mary Moss and Angie Skerrett go into the neighborhood each afternoon and actually teach on the sidewalks in front of the homes.

This gives the children an opportunity to get help with their homework and better their reading skills. The UMW brought school supplies to their summer social to aid Mary and Angie in their continued effort to reach these young children and express to them how Jesus Christ can make a difference in their lives.

Through our donations, they express our love and let the children know that someone cares for them. Angie and Mary are truly "blooms" on the sidewalk.



Members of First United Methodist Church in New Iberia recently completed an Advanced Lay Speaker course presented by Bob Sides. Twenty-four people attended.

District active in Igniting Ministry

The September arrival of the Igniting Ministry media campaign in Louisiana found the Acadiana District well prepared to take advantage of the opportunity. Although Acadiana was not one of the districts chosen for initial funding, Superintendent Terry Willis felt this an opportunity not to be missed.

With the support of the District Ministry Team, the effort was mounted to secure the necessary funding and proceed.

Workshops were held in the northern and southern regions of the district to equip pastors and lay-persons to maximize the benefit of the national television campaign for local congregations. On July 19 and July 30, at Asbury United Methodist in Lafayette and First United Methodist in Houma, approximately 65 people were introduced to the philosophy and purpose of the campaign, experienced samples of the radio, television, and print media to be used and received information on the mechanics of mounting a local campaign using a variety of media for both paid and public service advertising. As one workshop participant said, "You only get one Grand Opening." According to folks in the Acadiana district, this one will be grand.

Send your church's stories to the District Communication Advisor:

Rev. Dale Hensarling
515 E. Bellevue St.
Opelousas, LA 70570
(337) 942-3163
xpistou@aol.com

Good Neighbor Tours sweep through district churches

Passports, postcards and projects were all part of the summer Vacation Bible Schools held at many district churches. "Way to Go! Good Neighbor Tours" was the theme for Cokesbury's 2001 VBS curriculum. A unique feature was that each teacher hosted a specific "town" which was visited by all age groups during the week. Each location introduced the children to a different Bible character and story. Tours included Bethlehem, Emmaus, Gaza, Jericho and Zarephath.

Luke 10:27 was the daily topic of discussion: "You should love God with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself."

A daily part of the tour was music. The children enjoyed both singing the music with a Latin beat and accompanying themselves with rhythm instruments. Two of the many churches which sponsored tours were Jackson United Methodist Church and Moses Chapel UMC.



A trolley was an exciting addition to the "Way to Go! Good Neighbor Tours" Vacation Bible School at Jackson United Methodist Church, above right. Church member Leroy Harvey provided the trolley to publicize VBS. Parents, children and teachers enjoyed a ride before the graduation ceremony.

Churches pool resources for Igniting Ministry ads

Igniting Ministries has provided an opportunity for five churches to pool their financial resources in a joint effort in reaching the northern part of the Baton Rouge District.

Under the leadership of the Reverend Tom Dolph, pastor of Baker United Methodist Church, the churches agreed to purchase publicity in many of the local newspapers in their region.

Copy-ready advertisements were chosen from the Igniting Ministries outreach kit.

The advertisements featured the churches in their respective community newspaper.

The churches which were involved in the joint effort are: Blackwater, First UMC - Baker, Clinton, Clear Creek, Ethel and Jackson.



igniting MINISTRY

Jefferson United Methodist Church in Baton Rouge displays a banner declaring the theme of the Igniting Ministry campaign. Throughout the Louisiana Conference churches are displaying banners, yard signs and distributing door hangers to encourage new visitors during "Open House Month."



The Baton Rouge District Office has moved! Please make a note of the new address and contact information:

660 North Foster Dr.
B-210

Baton Rouge, LA 70806
Telephone: (225) 925-5080
Fax: (225) 925-5059

Send your church's stories to the District Communication Advisor:

Lyn Sheehan
P.O. Box 250
Jackson, LA 70748
(225) 634-7810
lyn_sheehan@hotmail.com



Sixty-plus members of the St. Andrews United Methodist Church youth group made an encore trip to Panama City for a now favorite event, "Live It Up." The non-denominational retreat/revival/music festival kept the young participants from all over the United States "hopping" from dawn 'til dusk. "Live It Up gives our youth group a great opportunity to get closer to God and to each other. We wouldn't miss it," said one member of the youth group. St. Andrews' youth director and counselors are already planning to attend the event next summer, as well as offering a mission trip opportunity to the enthusiastic group of young people.

Children's Home to sponsor golf classic

The annual Methodist Home Golf Classic will be held Oct. 1, at the Eastover Country Club in New Orleans.

The entry fee is \$100 per golfer, which includes greens and cart fees, food and beverages and a donation to the Methodist Home for Children of New Orleans, an institution for abused, abandoned and neglected children.

Sponsorship level donations are avail-

able as well. The Methodist Home Golf Classic was started in 1979 and has served the Home generously over the years. Tee times are available on a first-come registration basis beginning at 1 p.m.

For further information, please contact Munholland United Methodist Church at (504) 834-9910 or Jerry White, tournament chairman, at (504) 835-5031.

Methodist decries U.S. pullout at conference

WASHINGTON (UMNS) – The top executive of the United Methodist Church's international public policy and advocacy agency has expressed disappointment in the withdrawal of the U.S. delegation to the United Nations conference against racism.

The Bush administration withdrew its representatives Sept. 3 from the U.N. World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, scheduled for Aug. 31-Sept. 7, in Durban, South Africa.

"By doing so, the U.S. walked away

from international efforts to eliminate racism," said Jim Winkler, head of staff at the United Methodist Board of Church and Society, in a statement issued Sept. 6. "For too long, arrogance and self-righteousness have marked U.S. foreign policy," he said.

"The [conference] is addressing a variety of issues on racism: the caste system in India, the treatment of refugees and asylum-seekers, the impact of racism on health care and the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and disparities in law enforcement and systems of justice."

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Global Justice volunteers sow good will around the world



UMNS photo

GLOBAL JUSTICE VOLUNTEER — Terrell Starr, a Global Justice Volunteer with the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries, works in the garden at an orphanage in northern Russia. The 21-year-old student from Detroit spent two months working with children and youth at the orphanage. The most recent class of Global Justice Volunteers met in New York the week of Aug. 13 to share and discuss their experiences. The purpose of the program is to expose young adults to the challenges facing people around the world through a short-term placement in social justice work.

NEW YORK (UMNS) — Terrell Starr knows how hard it is to impact another person's life in just two months.

As a Global Justice Volunteer with the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries, the 21-year-old student from Detroit recently spent that time interacting with children and youth at an orphanage in northern Russia. Removed from their homes because of abuse or neglect, the children are at risk for involvement in criminal activity or prostitution. About 10 percent commit suicide, Starr said.

Although American youth may share some similar problems, the environment and lack of resources in Russia make everything much more difficult. In fact, Starr added that he's still having trouble comprehending all those obstacles. "I think it's a lifelong lesson," he said about his experience there.

The most recent class of Global Justice Volunteers met in New York the week of Aug. 13 to share and discuss experiences. The program exposes young adults to the challenges facing people around the world through a short-term placement in social justice work.

Some of the volunteers had been involved in mission work before. Starr, a student at Philander Smith College in Little Rock, Ark., was part of a Board of Global Ministries' mission trip to Senegal and spent another week in mission in Haiti.

In Russia, he and two other volunteers worked with an organization called Miramed, which provides clothing, medical care and various classes for children at the orphanage. One of the cultural adjustments for Starr was "being a black person in a town where no one had ever seen one before."

For Sohee Yoo, a 19-year-old Cornell University student, the challenge was relating to domestic workers from the Philippines, Indonesia and Sri Lanka who work in households in Hong Kong. She

and two other volunteers worked at Bethune House, a shelter for domestic workers who have suffered abuse from employers or are waiting to resolve immigration issues.

"When I first got there, I wasn't comfortable talking to them," she said. "They weren't comfortable talking to me, either."

Yoo moved to Pennsylvania from Korea when she was in high school. Meeting young women who have suffered abuse while doing domestic work to provide financial help to their families has made her realize the value of her own opportunities.

She also learned the value of offering simple friendship to the women at the shelter, "just to sit with them and talk with them and make them feel at home."

Interacting with others in the community was the highlight of Michael Laux's experience with Habitat for Humanity in Costa Rica. The 19-year-old University of Wisconsin student had worked previously with the Appalachian Service Project and had joined a group from his dormitory at a Habitat site in Alabama during the past year's spring break.

During his time in Esparza, in the central Pacific region of Costa Rica, he worked on construction at least three days a week and also made presentations to classes at the local high school about volunteering for Habitat.

"People deserve to have a good house," said Laux, of Milwaukee. "It was great to get out and meet the homeowners and work side by side with the homeowners every day."

The application deadline for the next class of Global Justice Volunteers, which begins Jan. 15, is Oct. 15. More information and an application form can be found at <http://gbgm-umc.org/vim>, the Board of Global Ministries' Web site.

Information also is available by calling the Rev. Bud Heckman at (212) 870-3825.

Laity Sunday, *from page 1*

through Jesus Christ. Third, we are to nurture persons in Christian living through worship, baptism, communion, prayer and the study of the Bible to be faithful stewards and servants. Fourth, we are to send them into the world to faithfully live out their discipleship.

We have to prepare ourselves to witness and to invite those persons who want to become a part of us. Let them know that our church is a place where they can be transformed and learn what it means to become stewards and disciples.

Our theme, "Partners in Ministry-All God's People Setting the Table," calls for us to be the Body of Christ, to be prepared to accept all persons and to

have our tables set and ready.

As you prepare for your Laity Sunday Observance, please use the following suggestions which have been shared with us by Tim Moss from The General Board of Discipleship:

Scriptures-Old Testament, Leviticus 19:10, 33-34; Epistle, III John 5-8; Gospel, Luke 19:1-6 or Matthew 25:1-13.

Litany- No. 432 Book of Worship or a reading from The Book of Discipline 2000-paragraph 122.

Hymns-338, "Where He Leads Me"; 415, "Take Up Thy Cross"; 558, "We are the Church"; 568, "Christ for the World We Sing"; 572, "Pass It On"; 577, "God of Grace and God of Glory"; and 578, "God of Love and God of Power."

Board of Discipleship to offer more training for youth workers this fall

The United Methodist General Board of Discipleship has partnered with Youth Specialties to provide more training for United Methodist Youth Workers.

This fall, Youth Specialties will give United Methodists a deeply discounted rate of \$275 (regular rate is \$340) at any of the three locations of the National Youth Worker's Convention.

The conventions are Tampa, Sept. 26-30; Sacramento, Nov. 1-5; and Dallas, Nov. 15-19.

United Methodist youth workers can

come to the convention a day early and take advantage of a new Critical Concerns Course just for them. "Youth Ministry in a United Methodist Church: Reach, Teach, Receive" will be taught by Terry Carty, Susan Hay and Dr. Ed Trimmer. The cost of the course is \$65 for a registered participant in the convention, \$100 for a non-convention participant.

For more information, visit the convention website at <http://www.youth-specialties.com/convention/2001>, or phone (888) 346-4179.



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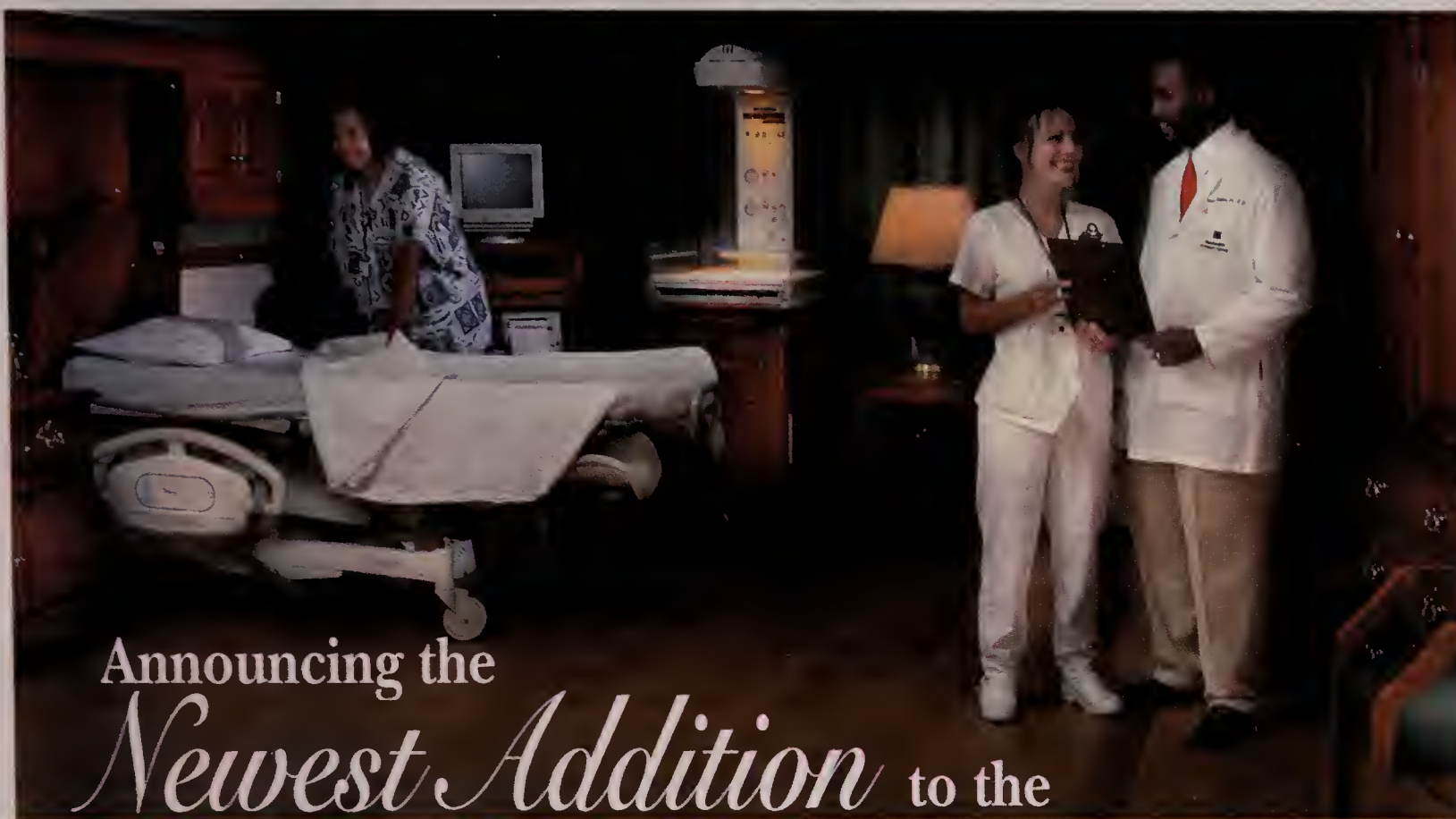
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VOL. 2, NO. 18

BATON ROUGE, LA

September 28, 2001

Igniting Ministry campaign adjusts to aftermath of terrorism

BY BETTY BACKSTROM
EDITOR

In the aftermath of the tragic terrorist attack on Sept. 11, The United Methodist Church offers "open hearts, open minds, and open doors" to a suffering nation. Once proclaimed "Open House Month" in conjunction with the national Igniting Ministry media campaign, September has become a month marred by violence, challenging United Methodists everywhere to meet the needs of those who



**igniting
MINISTRY**

are searching.

"The local churches have done a terrific job of making the promises of our media campaign a reality. Visitors have seen that what The United Methodist Church offers is truly available," said Steve Horswill-Johnston, executive direc-

tor of the Igniting Ministry campaign for United Methodist Communications.

The Igniting Ministry office responded immediately after the devastating events occurred. On Sept. 11, advertising spots were pulled and replaced with a single spot which ran until the following Friday at midnight. The message offered comfort and assurance from the Church during this tragic period, shifting the com-

See Igniting Ministry, page 3

UMCOR plans response

NEW YORK (UMNS) - The United Methodist Committee on Relief expects to respond to the World Trade Center tragedy on local and national levels.

Plans include providing certified counselors in the New York area, offering trauma-related training on a national level to those who work with children, and promoting understanding between Muslims and others.

What is not needed at the moment is material aid or volunteers. So much food, clothing and bottled water had arrived that the supplies were nearly creating a mini-disaster.

Monetary donations can be made to UMCOR Advance No. 901125-3 in collection plates or mailed to 475 Riverside Dr., Room 330, New York, NY, 10115. Credit card gifts can be made by calling (800) 554-8583.

But UMCOR staff member Kristin Sachen urged United Methodists not to divert funds intended for other projects around the world.

Kairos Outside #5 slated

Louisiana Kairos Outside #5 will be held Oct. 5-7, at Camp Alabama near Ruston.

Guests will be given flowers and song at 5:30 a.m. on Sunday, Oct. 7, and each person attending is asked to bring 32 flowers, one for each guest.

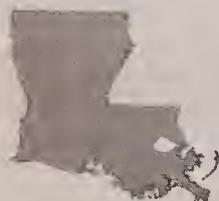
For more information, contact Julie Culbertson at (318) 631-8164 or by e-mail at jbrownculb@juno.com.

UMM set October retreat

A conference-wide retreat for United Methodist Men will be held Oct. 21 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Conference Center in Woodworth.

"A Man and His Bishop" is the theme for the event, featuring worship serves led by Bishop William Hutchinson. The retreat includes a business meeting, a T-Quest presentation, and a section on servant leadership. Registration is \$20 per person, and should be sent to Joe Kelley, P. O. Box 430, St. Francisville LA 70775.

- ☐ North Shore
District /6
- ☐ Monroe
District /7



A UMNS photo by the Rev. Thomas St. Clair; Below: by Susanna Miller



...Our home, sweet, home

Families of victims visit a memorial near the crash site of United Airlines Flight 93 in Pennsylvania. Ministering to the families has been a blessing to the Rev. Thomas St. Clair. "God has allowed me to see faith and love in action," said the superintendent of the Connellsville District, southeast of Pittsburgh. United Methodists throughout the Louisiana Conference responded to the tragedy of Sept. 11. In Shreveport, the Centenary College campus ministry held a candlelight vigil, left, in memory of those affected by the terrorist attacks. Conference churches were packed for special services on the national day of prayer, Sept. 14, and on the following Sunday. Other stories of the United Methodist response begin on page 2.

ON THE JOURNEY

A Hard Balance to Keep

"Abide with me; fast falls the even-tide; the darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide. When other helpers fail and comforts flee, Help of the helpless, O abide with me."

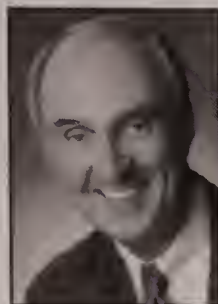
Henry F. Lyte, 1847

As I walked through the lobby of the Louisiana Conference Center in Woodworth on Tuesday, September 11 and saw the large group of people gathered in front of the television set I stopped to ask, "What is happening?" Someone said, "A plane has hit one of the towers of the World Trade Center in New York." As we all turned our attention to the breaking coverage we saw the second plane hit the second tower. It was then that we began to come to the sickening realization that these were no accidents.

The remainder of the morning was filled with anxious confusion as many stories, some true and some false, began to circulate as to the gravity of these two crashes and other ensuing events. Some of our number had loved ones who worked in the World Trade Center buildings and anxious fears began to rise for their safety. Shock stalked the hallways of the Conference Center and people began to make plans to go to their various homes for comfort and security. At noon we, like millions across America, gathered in the chapel at the Center and held prayer services for all who were there. The community of believers seated in that chapel that day became the arms of love and hearts of strength for one another as we tried to make sense of a senseless happening. Though reason failed us, faith in God did not. We knew that in spite of our limited sight and visible fear, God had not abandoned us and would not leave us comfortless.

As the days have passed from that fateful Tuesday we still try and grasp what has happened to our nation and our world. I suspect things will begin to be much different for us as a result of it all. Perhaps tightened security and more stringent immigration laws will be healthy for us, but I mourn the loss of the feeling of safety and freedom we have enjoyed for so long.

In the past few weeks, Kay and I traveled to Cambodia and Vietnam to observe the work of The United Methodist Church in those two countries. In each instance we were overwhelmed by the poverty and struck by the lack of infrastructure we are so used to having in the USA. In Cambodia the people are just beginning to recover from the insidious genocide of the Khmer Rouge, but their spirits are exuberant and their worship services are filled with great joy and strength. In Vietnam remnants of the conflict with the USA are still visible and the Christians are persecuted for their beliefs. The United Methodist Church in Vietnam is totally underground, unable to function as a



Bishop William W. Hutchinson

part of open society. If they are known to be worshipping or gathering in the name of Jesus, they are subject to imprisonment. Yet, the Vietnamese Christians are strong, determined, and unbowed by the persecution

they face.

The Christians we met and talked with in both countries encouraged us. Their commitment to Christ and his Kingdom was beautiful to behold. In spite of their many difficulties they were all positive that the way of Christ is "the Way." Nothing, not even death nor life, angels nor principalities, things present nor things to come, not height, depth, nor anything else in all creation could separate them from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord! (Romans 8: 38-39) No, in all things they see themselves as more than conquerors through him who loves them.

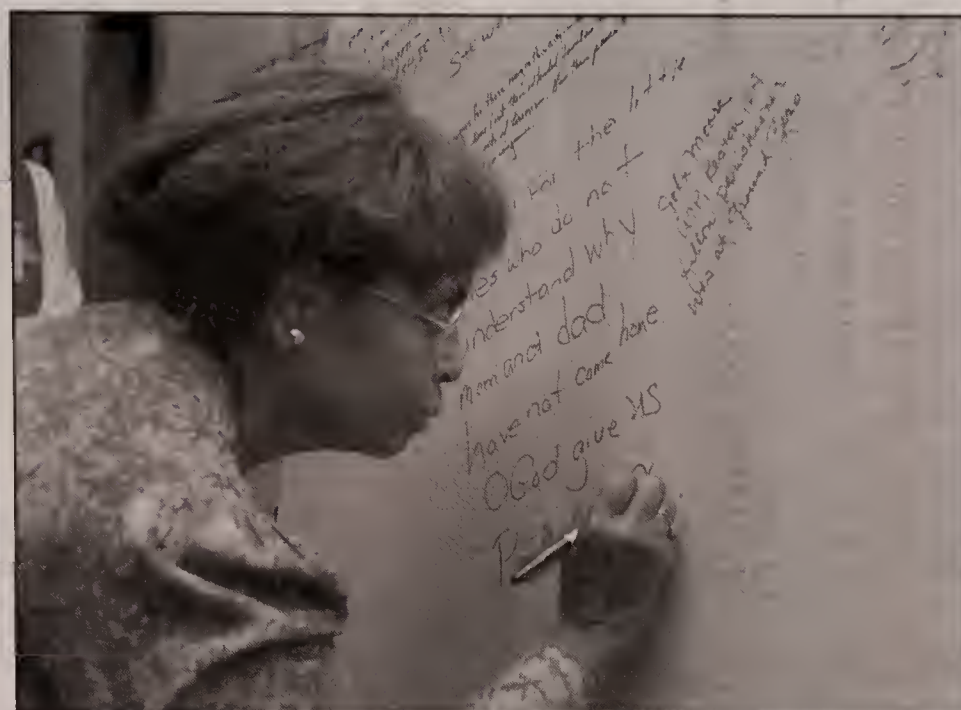
As we returned home, one of the most comforting and profound moments of our trip was when we saw the skyline of New York and landed safely at Kennedy International. We all remarked about how fortunate we are and how much freedom we all enjoy. It was good to touch USA soil again.

And now that has been invaded and violated by terrorists who would destroy our way of life and would bring to us the same kind of fear that exists in so many other parts of the world. I am convinced beyond any doubt that we will not capitulate to that kind of threat. Nor will we be cowed by terrorist activity. I also am convinced that the Christian community must now rise to her finest hour and proclaim the presence of God and the love of Jesus Christ. It is not with "swords' loud clashing the heavenly kingdom comes", but with love for neighbor and enemy alike and the beating of swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks.

Be assured, terrorism cannot go unchecked and those who have perpetrated this evil must pay. We as a nation must stand for justice as well as freedom. But we must do it in the spirit of our Christ who has called us to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. It's a hard balance to keep, but one for which we must always strive. May God bless and direct us in the days ahead as we live out our faith and as we continue to secure freedom for the world even as we continue to strengthen that which we already know and enjoy in our own midst. To God be the glory.

In Christ's love,

Bill Hutchinson



A UMNS photo © Jay Mallin

PRAYER WALL — Worshippers at Metropolitan Memorial United Methodist Church in Washington create a "prayer wall," inscribing the names of those affected by the national disaster on boards around the sanctuary during a national day of prayer Sept. 14.

New York church weathers terror fallout

NEW YORK (UMNS) — It wasn't the usual crowd, but participants at the Sept. 19 "Wonderful Wall Street Wednesday" service at John Street United Methodist Church were vocal in their praise and enthusiasm.

"Welcome back!" exclaimed the Rev. James McGraw, pastor of the small church just a few blocks from "ground zero" of the World Trade Center tragedy. "In trial and tribulation, in fire and terror, the oldest continuous Methodist society in America still stands." The congregation was founded in 1766.

Rev. Suzan Johnson Cook, senior pastor of the Bronx Christian Fellowship Church, a co-sponsor of the lunchtime ministry, acknowledged the difficulties everyone had experienced, but declared, "We're not going to let this be a ghost town, we're going to let this be a Holy Spirit town."

Under normal circumstances, the Wonderful Wall Street Wednesday service draws 400 or more people from the area. They crowd into the sanctuary, which is lined with stone tablets commemorating individual Methodists, for prayer, praise singing and a short sermon by one of the two pastors or a guest preacher. Some regulars have formed the New Millennium Choir, which rehearses every Monday and sings at the service twice a month.

After a summer hiatus, the Wednesday services had been scheduled to start again on Sept. 12, the day after terrorists brought down the twin towers. But that day, with the area cordoned off to all but rescue workers, McGraw sat in the building alone.

A week later, however, he joyfully shook hands with those who came to the door to worship. In total, an estimated 150 to 200 participants arrived.

Louisiana Conference *NOW!*

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LSU students become 'Friends of Gabriel'

Following is an excerpt from a letter sent by Mary Rachel Moore, co-president of the Wesley Foundation at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, to the student newspaper following the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11.

"Over and over this week, I've heard and read that many people want to help in the ongoing crisis in our nation. I've also heard that some students among our university community fear they might be persecuted here because of their faith or nationality. In response to any real or perceived threat to our fellow students, we at the Wesley Foundation at LSU have decided to initiate "Friends of Gabriel."

The angel Gabriel is important to the Muslim, Jewish and Christian traditions as the messenger of Allah or God. Gabriel spoke to Daniel and gave the Qu'ran to Muhammed. In the Christian tradition he spoke to Mary saying, "Be not afraid." Here, at LSU, since last Tuesday there have been students who are afraid to walk to class. I can only say that no person anywhere should ever have to fear to go to their own school. Thus, Wesley Foundation students offer ourselves to you as a friend of Gabriel. We will walk to or from class with you. Though I referenced the Jewish, Muslim and Christian scripture, empathy it would seem is universal and can be a deliberate act. We have seen the worst that humanity can do, we must show the better angels for which we can strive."

Sean Anglim, director of the Wesley Foundation at LSU, said, "The students have made a significant contribution toward expressing the best in Christianity and United Methodism on the campus. The Baton Rouge Islamic Center has expressed gratitude for the outpouring of love and concern that members of the Wesley Foundation have shown."

Leaders at the Islamic Center believe that situations on campus have calmed and that students are feeling much safer.

"Our objective is to reach out and cross boundaries that we either ignored or didn't know existed," said Anglim.

The Wesley Foundation campus retreat, scheduled for Sept. 28-29 at Camp Istrouma, will focus on Muslims and Christians in "one creation." Jihad Naser, president of the Baton Rouge Islamic Center, will lead the students in two of the planned sessions.

Igniting Ministry, from page 1

mercial message away from the invitational approach used previously.

"Right now, the scope of the campaign is being evaluated. Although we have returned to airing the original spots, that could change if events worsen," said Horswill-Johnston.

UMCOM wants to remain sensitive to the varied reactions of people as they struggle with the grief shared by a nation. "It is providential that our first national campaign is airing during one of the nation's worst tragedies in history. The United Methodist Church has been given the opportunity to live out our messages at a defining time. In trying to make the best decision as people of faith, it is felt

that pulling the spots and removing our welcoming presence would be wrong," he said.

Jackie Vaughan, director of Matching Grants for Igniting Ministry, wrote this message to campaign participants on Sept. 14: "Due to the tragic circumstances this week, most networks and stations were not inserting any commercials throughout the day. Therefore, the schedule that was originally scheduled this week (Sept. 10) has been moved to next week (Sept. 17)." Horswill-Johnston noted that the campaign could stretch into October, depending on the availability of time slots to "make good" missed spots.

Send notes of love to affected UM churches

United Methodist Communications has received questions as to where Sunday School classes, congregations and other groups might send notes of love and care. Listed below are some of the churches nearest where the blasts occurred. In addition to those listed, you could select nearly any congregation in the New York, Greater New Jersey, Baltimore-Washington or Virginia annual conferences as most have been affected in some way. Notes and packages may be sent by regular mail. Telephone calls may be more of a hindrance than a help as pastors and staff are extremely busy.

NEW YORK CITY CHURCHES (near the disaster site)

John Street UMC, 44 John Street, New York, NY 10038-3714, Pastor: James McGraw

Metropolitan-Duane UMC, 201 West Thirteenth Street, New York, New York 10011, Pastor: Taka Ishii,

met-duane@mindspring.com

Broadway Temple UMC, 4111 Broadway, New York NY 10033-3704, Pastor: Magaly Beltre

Washington Square UMC, 135 W Fourth St., New York NY 10012-1010 Pastor: Jacquelyn Moore

Chinese UMC (lower east side), 69 Madison Street, New York NY 10002-7201, Pastor: James Law

Park Slope UMC, (near Methodist Hospital), 452 7 St., Brooklyn NY 11215 Pastor: Elizabeth Braddon

Hanson Place Central UMC (downtown Brooklyn), 144 St. Felix, Brooklyn NY 11215, Pastor: Patrick Perrin

NEAR THE PENTAGON

Calvary UMC, 2351 S. Grant Street, Arlington, VA 22202-2548.

For a list of other churches in the Arlington district of the Virginia conference, visit

<http://www.novaumc.org/AD/AllChurches.asp> or contact CRT at crt@umcom.umd.org.

Minister urges tolerance for Muslims

A UMNS COMMENTARY
BY REV. BRUCE ROBBINS

I have been surprised at some responses to a recent UMNS story in which I said that Islam, a great living faith tradition of this world, is growing faster than any other with more than a billion adherents.

Some objected to my comments by pointing to Islam's holy book, the Koran, as a book of "hate and evil." These reactions reflect widespread misunderstanding that can have terrible consequences upon the needed relationships between Christians and Muslims in the United States.

Such points of view may underlie instances of violence carried out in recent days against Muslims, Middle Easterners, Arabs and so many others. Even a friend from India told me how he feared for his wife and children.

Imagine if someone decided to portray Christianity as a religion of hate and violence. Do you think he or she would have trouble using the Bible to prove that it was so? If the quotations were exact from the Bible, many who don't know Christianity would believe it.

Were I to try to characterize Christianity in that hateful way, I might start with the words of Jesus, "I have not come to bring peace but a sword" (Matt

10:34). Then I might turn to one of the countless Old Testament passages that speaks graphically of violence against the enemies of God. Of course, those "enemies" would be the persons opposed to us and our God.

Any one of us who knows the Bible could portray an awful picture and leave out the overwhelming message of love and reconciliation that is at the heart of the Gospel. That portrayal would bear false witness to the life and faith of Christians who seek to proclaim a new way of life to all humanity.

Our communities across the United States have changed dramatically in recent years. At one time, we assumed that nearly everyone was Christian, especially in rural communities. Our tolerance was uneven. Synagogues were sometimes attacked by misguided and hateful people.

Today, Christians are still predominant, but there are Jews, Hindus, Muslims and Buddhists in nearly every community. As staff executive of the United Methodist Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns, I recognize that we need to provide assistance and clearer guidelines for our relationships with other faith communities, especially in times of trial like the present.

Labyrinth workshop to be held in Slidell

A labyrinth workshop, for awareness and facilitator training, will be held Oct. 6 from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Aldersgate United Methodist Church in Slidell. Rev. Carole Cotton Winn, Rev. Dale Hensarling and Cherri Johnson will lead the workshop, which is designed to give participants the insights and resources that will encourage individual journeys in a labyrinth ministry.

The workshop will include an "open walk" from 7-9 p.m. on Friday evening, Oct. 5 for those who wish to drive in

early or who are local to the area. It will be held in the John Wesley Center at Aldersgate UMC.

Registration fee, which includes lunch, is \$25 and should be sent to: Aldersgate UMC, Attn: Jane Knight, 360 Robert Blvd., Slidell, LA 70458 by Oct. 1. For those seeking overnight accommodations, contact the Hampton Inn, Slidell at (985) 726-9777.

For more information, contact Winn at (985) 639-9531 or email ccotton-winn@msn.com.

The Louisiana United Methodist Foundation is pleased to announce:

Financial Planning for Ministers of the Louisiana Conference

conducted by Bert Faulk, C.P.A., of Faulk and Winkler, LLC
Friday, October 5, at 9 o'clock in morning
at the Louisiana Conference Center in Woodworth

Topics include: goal setting
debt management
savings
investment strategies
retirement planning
benefit packages



Lunch will be served.
For reservations, contact Tracie Wharton
at (225) 346-1535 or (800) 256-9317

Methodist Hospital

A Supplement to *Louisiana Now*

Pendleton Memorial Methodist Hospital • 5620 Read Boulevard • New Orleans, Louisiana 70127 • (504) 244-5100 • www.pmmh.org

Contemporary Design, Convenience and Comprehensive Services Highlight Methodist Women's Center

New Facility Now Open

"It's so pretty, you almost forget you're in a hospital."

"You just don't know how important it is to have a window in your hospital room. Every labor room here is open and spacious."

"It's more than a place to have a baby. I'm making sure that my mother comes in for a mammogram and breast self-exam classes."

"No matter how nervous my husband is, he won't get lost. All we have to do is get off the elevator and there will be someone there to reassure him and bring us to a labor room."



Methodist Hospital Chairman of the Board Marian Eggerton cuts the ribbon as the Methodist Women's Center officially opens. The new facility offers convenient, comprehensive care in an environmentally pleasing and comfortable setting. Participants in opening ceremonies included, front row, Methodist Women's Center Care Coordinator Natalie Norman; Methodist Hospital OB/GYN Section Chief Oscar del Portal, MD; Methodist Hospital Director of Maternal-Child and Critical Care Nursing Janeene Gerhold; Methodist Women's Center Nurse Manager Kim Faught; Marian Eggerton; Councilwoman Cynthia Willard-Levins; Methodist Health System Foundation Executive Vice President Richard A. Henault; Methodist Hospital Vice President of Patient Services Carol Beck; Methodist Hospital Chief of the Medical Staff Lloyd Gueringer, Jr., MD; back row, Councilman James Singleton; State Representative Nita Hutter; State Representative Patrick Swilling; Methodist Hospital President Frederick Young, Jr.; and Methodist Hospital Executive Vice President Cameron Barr.

ing a premier, comprehensive site for women's healthcare.

As Methodist Women's Center staff and affiliated physicians prepared for a seamless transition from the old to the new, WWL Radio talk show host Andre' Trevigne officially kicked off the all-day event with an on-location broadcast, interviewing Methodist Hospital physicians and staff. Those attending received guided tours by

the Center's staff or were invited to explore the new facility at their own pace.

A highlight of the day was a Women's Expo and Baby Fair featuring a wide range of displays, products and services for women, their babies and families. Visitors to the Hospital and Women's Center were also invited to participate in complimentary diabetes screenings and blood pressure

readings as well as register for Senior Focus membership and SportsCare at the Plaza exercise classes.

Located on the third floor of the Methodist Hospital East Tower, Methodist Women's Center is the primary site for all women's healthcare services. Mammography, stereotactic breast biopsies and ultrasound diagnostic procedures; labor and delivery; and newborn care along with

The 1,600 visitors to the Methodist Women's Center Grand Opening celebration in August were more than complimentary about the new facility. The comments echoing throughout the day confirmed that Methodist Hospital had not only met the needs of the community but had also exceeded expectations in provid-

general gynecological and postpartum nursing are services offered at the new facility.

Architectural highlights of the center include spacious treatment, reception and family waiting areas. Specially designed labor rooms feature wooden floors and cabinets, with large and easily accessible bathrooms. Large windows encasing the labor area offer a comforting and soothing patient environment with a natural light source.



Methodist Women's Center

Through the Seasons of Your Life

Methodist Women's Center's LDR (labor/delivery/recovery) suites are designed to eliminate the transfer of the laboring patient to the delivery area. The LDR concept promotes family bonding, with spacious accommodations allowing family members to be involved in all aspects of the birthing process. The rooms also feature necessary equipment to conduct immediate newborn assessments.

Whether a patient chooses an LDR or the more traditional labor room, the Center's bedside computers provide an up-to-date medical history. An advanced fetal monitoring system

tracks the patient's fetal heart rate and contraction patterns from any area of the entire unit. Additionally, the surveillance system affords nurses and physicians the opportunity to document treatment and progress on the surveillance strip to further monitor patient changes. Patient information from previous admissions is also stored on the computerized system, which is helpful in determining individual patterns and timing factors in the delivery process.

Three spacious delivery rooms are fully equipped for surgery and a recovery room provides cardiac and pulse oximetry monitoring.

An isolation labor room provides negative pressure needed to care those patients requiring respiratory isolation.

To further assist expectant parents and enhance the birthing experience, a Methodist Women's Center Care Coordinator is available to answer questions about pregnancy, prenatal vitamins, exercise, labor, delivery, and bringing your baby home.

A new education center offers a wide range of programs as the family progresses through pregnancy including Lamaze, prenatal exercise, parenting and sibling classes.

In addition to classes for the expectant family, the Methodist Women's Center offers numerous workshops, seminars and screenings for women throughout all phases of their lives.

For additional information, a physician referral, or to schedule an appointment, call the Methodist Women's Center at (504) 244-2999. ■



Methodist Hospital Nurse Debbie Troutman, right, uses a model to explain the proper techniques of breast self-examination during the Methodist Women's Center open house. More than 1,600 visitors participated in tours, demonstrations, and displays as part of the Center's official opening.



Janeene Gerhold welcomes Methodist Hospital Board Chairman Marian Eggerton and Board Member Judy Dawson as they begin a guided tour of the new Methodist Women's Center.



Director of Maternal-Child and Critical Care Nursing Janeene Gerhold highlights the unique features of the Methodist Women's Center for visitors attending the new facility's open house.



Methodist Women's Center Care Coordinator Natalie Norman assists a mother-to-be in registering for prenatal classes. The new center offers classes and seminars for women and families ranging from parenting skills to osteoporosis.

North Shore pastor to lead course of study at Emory University

BY PATTYE HEWITT

Elected by the student body and with the full support of the faculty, Pastor Emile Tosso from Loranger United Methodist Church was named president and will be the keynote speaker of the Emory University Course of Study and Advanced Course of Study in July 2002.

"I'm very excited about going back and being a pastor to the pastors that will be in attendance. Although my first priority is to fulfill my pastoral duties, I'll also have the privilege of making various social arrangements and helping put together the praise and worship services for the evenings."

Tosso remembers the days when things were cloudy and unclear. Born in New Orleans, near City Park, Tosso remembers being a regular church attendee. "My mother was a devout Christian. In her eyes, there was no excuse for missing worship service. She had perfect attendance for 8 or 9 years in the Presbyterian Church we attended. Every Sunday morning, my mother would tell me that we were going to God's house."

Tosso was confirmed in the Presbyterian faith and committed his life to Christ as a youth.

"I'll never forget it," says Tosso. "I was at the Young Life Ranch when I made that decision." In the years that followed, Tosso began to experience the call to ministry, but never pursued it further. After graduating high school from East Jefferson in 1965, he met the girl that would soon be his wife and set off for college at Southeastern University. As time passed, Tosso lost interest in the church and stopped attending. "I thought I had everything under control, but in actuality, I was losing control. I



Tosso

began drinking a little and relying on it, instead of Him."

In January 1971, Tosso received the piece of mail that would put him on the path of serving our country...a draft notice. In June of that same year, he joined

the United States Navy and spent the next 4 years in active duty in the Submarine Service. During this time, Tosso completed his undergraduate degree and eventually enrolled in Officer Candidate School. In the years that followed, he would make transitions from one state to another. His "homes" would include: New York, Connecticut, Virginia, Maryland, Illinois, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, Tennessee and Washington DC.

During this time, Tosso became more and more dependant on alcohol and was lost in a world that didn't include God. "I was depressed, alone and in denial. These years weren't good and I didn't see an end in sight."

Living in Washington, D.C., divorced and drinking heavily, Tosso went on a walk one day that would change his life forever. "While aimlessly wandering down Duke St., I came upon Farlington United Methodist Church. As I entered the sanctuary, I heard 'Here I Am Lord' being played. I knew it was God calling me back. I recommitted my life to Christ and returned to Louisiana."

Tosso began attending St. Timothy UMC in Mandeville, where he found a loving congregation under the spiritual guidance of Rev. Larry Maddin. It was in July 1994 while attending a "Singles"

meeting at the church that Tosso met his soul mate and wife of seven years, Bobbie.

"Money was tight, but we had fun together and I knew this was going to be something special." In November of that same year, Tosso was a participant at a Cursillo retreat. "It was during that weekend experience that the call to ministry began to reveal itself again," he said. Many "coincidental" circumstances brought this seeking man to finally recognize and embrace his true calling.

"I had volunteered to be a table waiter during a Karios Prison Ministry weekend in 1996. One of the pastors that was suppose to be a table leader called and said he couldn't make it, so I was asked to fill in. The 'call' was crystal clear." Tosso said he remembers it like it was yesterday.

"God said to me, I called you once before-I'm calling you again." This time, the request didn't fall on deaf ears. By the following August, Tosso was asked to fill the pulpit at Loranger UMC. "I said yes and before I knew it, I was the full-time pastor."

He was offered the charge in September and by October 1st, Tosso was made full-time pastor of the small church. During the 1998 Annual Conference in Shreveport, Tosso gave his personal testimony.

"That was very special to me and hopefully it spoke to someone who needed to hear my message." Since that time, Tosso has joyfully served the people of Loranger. "I love what I do and serving the Lord in this special way. Bringing people into a relationship with Christ is exciting and the most important contribution I can make."

Tosso says that too many churches,

especially rural ones, have pastors that don't receive the help they need to stay afloat and stay encouraged. "I was and continue to be blessed by the people that supported me and my decision to go into full-time ministry. My church family at St. Timothy UMC constantly affirmed me and gave me strength during those difficult times. Carl Roads, Gene Finnell, James Mitchell, Flint Shea, Terry Willis and Fred Barnes were just some of the clergy who kept me focused and kept my spirit alive. Grayson Watson, my District Superintendent, has been there for me time after time. I always received the right thing at the right time in a nonjudgmental, non-threatening way. I will always be grateful for the love I felt and for the prayers that went up for me and my family."

When I asked Tosso what his keynote sermon would be about next summer, he replied, "I've starting working on it and have an idea of what I want to say, but most of all I want to affirm and uplift the group of pastors who will come from a variety of situations. It is my desire to encourage them to keep going and to do their best."

Along with preaching God's Word and being a listening ear for those who need support and confidence, Tosso plans on cooking red beans & rice for the crowd of approximately 200-250.

"Because I'm from Louisiana, everyone expects me to make the state's most popular dish."

It's just one more thing that this special man does to make others feel appreciated and cared for. We thank God for the gift of this inspiring minister whose roots are embedded in the Scriptures, and whose heart is filled with the Holy Spirit.



Harry's Chapel United Methodist Church in Bogalusa recently celebrated the conclusion of Vacation Bible School with a fun day at Cassidy Park. This year's theme was "Along the Way," and the VBS was a great success.



St. Timothy United Methodist Church recently announced a partnership with Habitat for Humanity (St. Tammany West) to build one of twelve Habitat houses for 2001. Pictured above from left to right are: Dick Sharp, St. Timothy Pastor Emeritus Dr. J. Lawrence Maddin, Habitat For Humanity Founder Millard Fuller, Harry Cripps, Pat Smith, St. Timothy Senior Pastor James Mitchell, and Murray Fincher. Groundbreaking for the Habitat house took place Aug. 3. David and Margie Fulton and their four children, one son age 2 and three girls 8, 11 and 16, will purchase the house to be built on Montgomery St. at Kleber in Mandeville.



Send your church's stories to the District Communication Advisor:

Rev. Brady Whitton
355 Asbury Dr., Mandeville, LA 70471-3136
(504) 626-3307, E-mail: bswhitton@earthlink.net



Tracy Wyatt, Deena Burch, Diane Martin, and Christy Cuthbert lead St. Paul's United Methodist Church in worship at *A New Song*.

Churches kick off contemporary services

BY JANA SMITH
DISTRICT MISSIONER

Two churches in the Monroe District are scheduled to begin weekly Sunday evening Contemporary Worship services Sept. 9.

First United Methodist Church in West Monroe will have their service, called Visions, each week at 7:00 p.m. The pastor, Rev. Karl S. Klaus, responded when asked about Visions, "Visions is not an alternative service, but rather a worship service designed to reach others, not only within our congregation, but also in the community as well." The purpose statement for Visions is "For those searching to see today and needing a vision for tomorrow." It is First UMC's hope that Visions will accomplish this through "sharing the word of God through praise music, drama, video, computer graphics, the spoken word and more." Visions will be held in the sanctuary at First UMC, West Monroe.

A New Song will begin weekly at St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Monroe at 6:30 p.m. in the sanctuary. When asked how he feels about A New Song, Senior Minister, Rev. Richard "Dick" Humphries said, "St. Paul's UMC's version of a contemporary service came about after almost a year of

dreaming, planning and hard work on the part of a design team. They have dubbed our service A New Song and that is a fitting name. God keeps doing new things in our midst, and we simply must be open to them or else they pass us by. I am excited about our fourth worship option [currently there are two Sunday morning and one Wednesday evening] here at St. Paul's and its capacity to reach new persons for Christ and meet the needs of our existing members as well."

The Rev. Kevin D. Smith, Associate Minister at St. Paul's UMC, is the lead pastor for this service. Rev. Smith said, "I believe A New Song offers worship options both in the area of worship style and worship time. And I also believe it will reach out to the 'unchurched' in the community as well as 'inactive' members at St. Paul's UMC. I believe it will give people opportunities to worship through music and the arts plus a variety of other different ways," when asked about how A New Song contemporary service will affect St. Paul's UMC in Monroe. A New Song's title is based on Psalm 98:1, "I will sing until the Lord a new song."

Both churches encourage everyone to come experience their exciting new services.



Connectionalism in Action! This mural was painted for Jesus to the Rescue Vacation Bible School at First United Methodist Church in Tallulah. Then it was passed to Lea Joyner Memorial UMC in Monroe and then shared with Claiborne UMC in West Monroe before going back to Tallulah. Way to go churches!

District welcomes new lay leader



Wyatt

The Monroe District is proud to introduce to the Louisiana Conference our new District Lay Leader Sarah Wyatt. She is a member of St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Monroe where she grew up. Sarah is excited about being a part of the leadership of the Louisiana Conference and looks forward to sharing in ministry in The United Methodist Church. When asked about being the lay leader for Monroe, Wyatt said, "I am very excited about all the things going on in the United Methodist Church today and am thrilled I was asked to get involved in such a committed and constructive way. I look forward to meeting other lay persons that are enthusiastic about our church and working together to glorify Christ through outreach and love for one another."

Mt. Nebo UMC follows Percept plan to acquire new church home

Mt. Nebo United Methodist Church is a rural but thriving church in the Monroe District. For many years they have been located in a church building that is virtually impossible to find, unless you know exactly where you are going. Unfortunately, after many years of decay, the building was condemned and for several years now Mt. Nebo UMC has been without a church building of their own. They have been wanderers without

a place to call home.

Beginning in January, Jana Smith, the Monroe District Missioner and Tonya Hamilton, the Monroe District Ministry Team Education Coordinator, began working with Mt. Nebo on a process called ReVision from Percept Group, Inc. The Conference Church Extension Team asked them to participate in this process to develop a mission and vision statement as well as a plan for the next three years of ministry as they were thinking about relocating their church building.

As Tonya and Jana began working with the congregation, there was a bit of resistance. They wanted to move forward on relocation, but they were not real excited about the slow down that this process was seeming to make happen. But it didn't take long for that resistance to fade and for Tonya and Jana to become a part of the Mt. Nebo

family. Six months after beginning this process, the congregation had completed the task with a plan in hand. This plan called for the congregation by the end of September to locate and purchase property on Highway 165 that would be visible to everyone. Bigger than that, the plan called for the congregation to begin a small group Bible Study in a member's home in June and to continue to form groups every three months throughout the next year. God was moving in this congregation in ways that were more than a relocation plan.

Rev. Anice Moses, pastor of Mt. Nebo said, "Although the congregation was somewhat reluctant upon beginning, I reminded them of an old familiar quote, 'Our time is not always God's time.' With my encouragement and support the Mt. Nebo church moved forward with the Percept program. Through the Revision

process which included an eight week Bible study, the congregation was able to understand the vision God has for the church and the community. Because we were obedient and trusted God through efforts of Jana, Tonya, Marie and the Church Extension Team, God has blessed us with a possible new church home."

Moses was able to share with the congregation about a potential piece of property with an existing structure on Highway 165 N. She recalls their reaction, "Upon receiving the news from me about the possibility of a new church home, there were tears shed and shouts for joy. The Mt. Nebo congregation is very excited and eager to attend the first service in their new church home." At this point, the congregation is on its way to purchasing property. God is working with this congregation in mighty ways.

Send your church's stories to the District Communication Advisor:

Jana Smith
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Shalom Zone combats hunger, boredom in summer

BY ABE LEVY

Shady Grove United Methodist Church has been fighting boredom, poverty and academic disinterest among youth for four straight summers now, largely through a state-sponsored feeding and enrichment program.

It started officially after Northwest Louisiana was declared a "Shalom Zone," a United Methodist designation for a spot ripe for unified outreach by churches, the government and other civic agencies.

While it was slow going at first, now the congregation has some much-needed help.

Three De Soto parish churches have joined efforts this summer, opening their buildings for an eight-week program. Consequently, the program grew from one site in its first year that fed about 200 children each day to five sites now that feed up to 500.

"The more that we come together, it makes it stronger," said the Rev. George Thomas, pastor of the 220-member Shady Grove church. "We're pulling together other resources and reaching out across the lines from one religion to another."

Poverty has been the top priority for the participating churches which include St. Elizabeth Baptist of Grand Cane, Calvary Baptist of Mansfield and Moore's Chapel Baptist Church of South Mansfield.

"I wish sometimes more churches would take part," said Donzell Hughes, pastor of St. Elizabeth, which runs a food and clothing ministry in Mansfield. "(The program) keeps (young people's) minds occupied on positive things. We're giving them an outlet."

Rev. Alonzo Campbell, director of Special Ministries for the Conference, explained, "The goal of the Shalom Zone ministry is to empower local congregations and local communities to work together to improve economic development, health care, congregation development and multicultural relations. Our philosophy is to teach people 'how to fish,' rather than giving them the 'fish,' thereby building self sufficiency."

Shalom Zone efforts are based on the premise that every community has resources and assets to build upon. "It is not a giveaway program. Instead, the church is encouraged to reach out to the community and to make it a vessel of self-determination," said Campbell.

De Soto parish is not the only area in the state being served by a Shalom Zone project. First Street UMC in New



Photo by Robert Ruiz, Shreveport Times

Ashley Williams, left, visits with Alexis Canno as Christopher Grant eats lunch at the Mansfield Multi-Cultural Center. The feeding and enrichment program is a project of the Shalom Zone based out of Shady Grove United Methodist Church.

Orleans is building housing for the elderly. Thompson UMC, also in New Orleans, runs a creative arts center, the first of its kind sponsored by The United Methodist Church.

In Bastrop, Mount Olive UMC orchestrated an outreach youth rally, and has facilitated a tutorial program for at-risk children and youth for several years. First UMC, Shreveport is currently meeting with community groups to best determine how the church can be in mission with under-served areas neighboring their complex.

In De Soto parish, the churches fit the program well because they already know the parents and children with the target neighborhoods, said program coordinator Betty Carter.

"This is a safe haven for the children," she said. "Parents know they're going to get two hot meals each day. They don't have to worry about that. We're part of keeping them safe and out of trouble during the summer."

The state Department of Education pays a per-day, per-child amount for the program: \$1.23 for breakfast and \$2.28

for lunch. That income also pays the wages of about 15 staff members, transportation and supplies.

The meals draw the children, volunteers said, but the activities make a lasting impression. Math and English tutoring and organized games like kickball and volleyball fill the 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. weekday routine.

Robert Haskett, 18, of Mansfield graduated from high school recently and decided to volunteer as a math and English tutor to younger teenagers. He sees it as a "Christian deed everyone's supposed to do" and as preparation for a teaching career.

"I told my friends I was bored at home, watching too much TV," he said. "(Now) I tell my mom every day I can see myself doing this like in 10 years."

"Shalom Zone" is a ministry developed by the General Conference of the United Methodist Church in 1992 as a way to address problems in the aftermath of the Los Angeles riots.

The idea involves designating an area as a "zone" that churches, government agencies and caring volunteers target for

outreach, depending on the local human needs. More than 350 Shalom Zones have been created in the United States and several in foreign countries. Louisiana has seven such zones.

The program's ability to pull various groups and individuals together for a common goal is why Shalom Zones work, said the Rev. Alonzo Campbell, who coordinates Shalom Zones in Louisiana for The United Methodist Church.

"(Shalom Zones) try to enable churches to visualize that regardless of the economic strangulation that may exist in a community, every community has been blessed by God with some resources," he said. "It is reaching people with the love of Jesus Christ." Interested persons can contact Campbell at (225) 664-7979; fax, (225) 664-7955; or by e-mail at: alonzojcampbell@yahoo.com.

Editor's Note: The above article was reprinted with permission from The Shreveport Times, with additional reporting by LouisianaNow! Editor Betty Backstrom.

W.T. Handy Convocation Registration

Nov. 9-10, 2001, \$25 Early Registration through Oct. 1, \$35 Registration thereafter

District: _____

Church: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Telephone: () _____ Fax: () _____

Checks payable to: Louisiana Conference Special Ministries
P.O. Box 193, Denham Springs, LA 70727

Workshop on Premarital and Marital Counseling

Training in Use of Life Innovations Materials

Oct. 26, 2001 (deadline for registration, Oct. 17)

Cost: \$125

Location: Blackwater United Methodist Church, Baker, Louisiana

Contact: Brady B. Forman

9429 Dyer Dr., Baker, LA 70714

e-mail: bcfmrn@msn.com

Fax: (225) 262-0463 Phone: (225) 261-9010



THE UNITED
METHODIST
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LOUISIANA

Now!



NEWS,
OPPORTUNITIES AND
WITNESS OF LOUISIANA
CONFERENCE MINISTRIES

VOL. 2, NO. 19

BATON ROUGE, LA

October 12, 2001

Volunteers in Mission pushes ahead after terrorist attacks

BY BETTY BACKSTROM
EDITOR

Conference Volunteers In Mission staff members have recently addressed questions and concerns about travel safety as they schedule next year's calendar of mission trips, at home and abroad.

The terrorist attacks of Sept. 11 have prompted an even closer look at conditions around the world that could impact the security and wellbeing of Louisiana volunteers as they serve oth-

ers through VIM.

"We are almost in daily contact with the General Board of Global Ministries, the airlines and the travel industry as a whole. Those in the know feel that it is actually safer to travel at this time due to heightened security measures throughout the industry. Those who have traveled internationally in the past know that terrorists have been active in other countries for a long time. What we have experienced here is, to some measure, what the rest of the world lives with on a

daily basis," said Rev. Larry Norman, director of Volunteers in Mission.

GBGM recently reported that nationwide only two mission trips have been cancelled since Sept. 11.

Norman emphasized that VIM is very careful not to schedule trips where a high possibility of violence exists. As a result of this effort, there are no trips currently scheduled to Israel.

James Hollis, director of the Jung

See Mission, page 6

Workshop to focus on medicine, religion

In celebration of Medicine and Religion Week, Methodist Hospital in New Orleans will present "Awakening the Doctor Within" on Thursday, Oct. 18, from 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

The seminar will be held at Methodist Hospital, 5620 Read Boulevard, New Orleans, LA.

Medicine and Religion Week was established by the Orleans Parish Medical Society to celebrate the relationship that exists between medicine and what people believe about God, disease and themselves.

Guest speaker Russell M. Jaffe, MD, PhD, world renown lecturer on the causes and consequences of immune defense and repair function in health and healing, will discuss the power of faith in healing.

All clergy are invited to participate in this FREE program. For reservations or more information, please call the Methodist Hospital Pastoral Care Department at (504) 244-5430.

PASTORS

Don't forget to fill out an Igniting Ministry evaluation form. If you did not receive one, the form is also available on The Web at www.la-umc.org.



Houses of God

United Methodist churches in the Baton Rouge District have joined Habitat for Humanity in working on a home which has come to be known as the "Methodist House." At right, Carroll Rowley, a member at First UMC, applies foam around a window while Parkview Baptist member Ralph Campbell sizes up a post. A member of the Habitat family, Ementie Bowie, is an employee of First UMC.



Photos by Joshua Lewis; top left, courtesy Erich Mansell

United Methodist Men from Henning Memorial UMC in Sulphur pitched in with Habitat for Humanity in Lake Charles, preparing jambalaya for over 200 workers Sept. 30. Pictured above left are Richie Gregory, Brad Vincent, Tommy Bell, Ron Guillory, Erich Mansell, Rocky Keeley, and Pat Granger, Hunter Vincent, Rudy Young and Garth Frenzel. Bottom left, Leagh Ann Unglesby, youth director at Blackwater UMC, shows off a staple gun at the Baton Rouge project.

- New Orleans District / 4
- Lake Charles District / 5



ON THE JOURNEY

Other Boats Were With Him

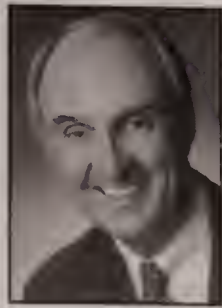
These past few weeks have been very different and difficult. While my mind has been on hundreds of different subjects, there's that one overriding circumstance that seems to keep invading my thoughts. September 11, 2001, just won't go away. Everywhere around me – newspaper headlines, television news, yard signs, hanging flags, the entrance to my subdivision, magazine covers, baseball caps, billboard slogans, radio broadcasts, e-mails, children's art, T-shirts – I am reminded of that tragic day. And today, Sunday, October 7, I am hearing breaking news that there is some kind of "strike" underway in Afghanistan. It just keeps on occupying everything we are about as a people.

I have struggled with what to write to you this time. I promised articles on Cambodia and Vietnam. They will still come because they are important. I have thought of the dozens of events I have been part of concerning the Louisiana Conference and the good news that will positively affect our lives. You'll still hear of them because you will be part of those events as they unfold. I've thought of some of the small glimpses of truth I have experienced in just day to day living, but I can share those at any time. I just feel I must say something more about September 11, 2001, and its aftermath.

There's a small scripture sentence that has dwelt firmly in my thoughts these past few weeks. In fact, I've preached on it as a result of its haunting presence. It is found in Mark's gospel, chapter 4. It is in the story of Jesus asking his disciples to take him across to the other side of the Sea of Galilee and while on the journey a great storm arose and the boat was filling with water. The disciples were frightened and awakened Jesus, who was asleep in the stern, and cried, "Teacher, do you not care if we perish?" Jesus awoke and rebuked the wind and calmed the sea and asked the disciples, "Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?"

It's a story we know well. But there is one key sentence we never seem to notice. It is this. "And other boats were with him."

Why does Mark record that statement? Who are in those other boats? Is it for historical documentation that the statement is made? If other boats were with them then others could say, "Yes, the storm happened and this is a verifiable account." Or is there another lesson? I think there is another lesson. And that lesson is this: what happened to the boat in which Jesus was



Bishop William W. Hutchinson

"When the seas get rough, we in the church are to fix our eyes on Jesus, seek his guidance, and then find calm within ourselves. As a result, other ships will find safety as well."

riding was key to what happened to every other boat on the sea with them. We don't travel the sea of life alone. It's not just about us. There are other boats with us, and how we handle the storms that come our way in the boat in which Jesus is the central figure has great impact on how the other boats fare.

I believe we can liken the boat in which Jesus was the central figure to the church. How the occupants of that particular boat, that great ship of faith, react to life's storms determines the

safety of all the other ships on the sea of life with us. When the seas get rough, we in the church are to fix our eyes on Jesus, seek his guidance, and then find calm within ourselves as well as within our ship. As a result, other ships on the sea will find safety as well.

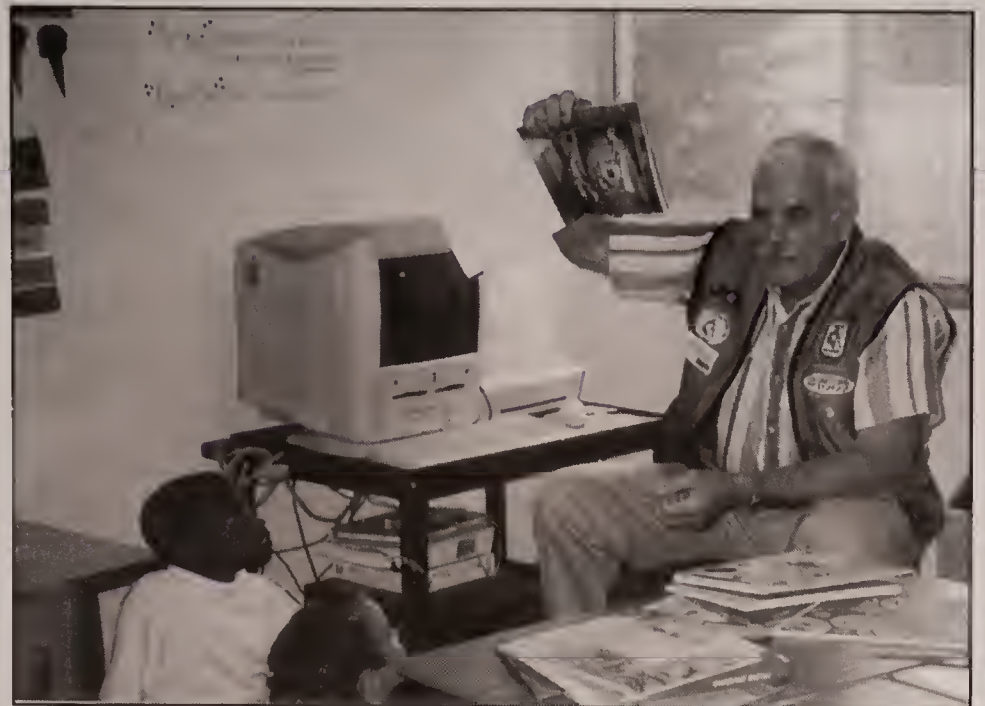
As I reflect on the terrorist attacks upon our nation, I have to remember that not all who died and whose families were devastated were from the United States, or were even Christian for that matter. They were from all over the world and they represented many world faiths. Many other boats join us. How we handle this crisis will have great impact on our way of life here at home, yes. But think of the impact it has on the entire planet! Other boats are with us.

We in the church are central to how our nation handles this crisis. As we apply Jesus' teachings to our actions, and as we live out our lives in accord with his will for us, we will have great impact on how "the other boats" handle the storm and fare in the crisis. We are not alone. Jesus is not asleep. He calls us not to be afraid and panic even though our boat is rocking terribly. He is still the master of the sea and he will bring right perspective and peace to the angry waves! We must cling to him. We must hear his every word. We must rely on his spirit to guide our spirit. Then we must act accordingly. If we do anything less, we will endanger not only ourselves, but also all the other boats of the world.

I call us to deep reflection on what it means to be in this boat with Jesus while on this stormy sea with so many others. It certainly is a sobering thought for me.

In Christ's love,

Bill Hutchinson



Joe Kelley, president of United Methodist Men for the Louisiana Conference, is encouraging UMM groups from churches throughout the state to "adopt" classes at their local schools, like this one he is reading to at Bains Elementary School in St. Francisville.

United Methodist Men at St. Francisville United Methodist Church have adopted three classes at local schools, giving volunteer and monetary support to the teachers and students.

"We read to the classes, we help with projects and parties. We are the teachers' helpers," said Kelley. Donations of \$50 have been given to each "adopted" class.

Gammon to celebrate Founder's Day

Pastors and friends of Gammon Theological Seminary are invited to mark their calendars for this year's Founder's Day and inspiring Jones Lecture Series in Atlanta, Ga., Dec. 3-5.

The theme is "Ministry in the 21st

Century: Inclusive Mandates."

For further information, please contact Dr. Walter McKelvey, President-Dean of Gammon Theological Seminary at (404) 581-0300 or email: wmckelvey@itc.edu.

Enroll for health benefits in October

The Louisiana Conference health benefit program provides for an annual open enrollment period each October. This means that any full-time, active clergy or full-time lay employee of the church who is not presently in the health benefits program may elect coverage or change coverage under the plan for

themselves and their eligible dependent(s). The October open enrollment period is for coverage effective Jan. 1, subject to an 18-month pre-existing condition limitation. For information, and an enrollment packet, call Julie Stinson, assistant insurance officer at (225) 346-1646, ext. 202.

Louisiana Conference *NOW!*

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Conference to celebrate role in school system integration



Revs. Andy Foreman, Robert Harrington and John Winn recently met to plan a commemoration of the Louisiana Conference's role in the integration of the New Orleans school system more than 40 years ago.

On the afternoon of Monday, Nov. 11, United Methodists in the Louisiana Conference will celebrate the Church's role in the integration of the Orleans Parish public school system, which took place over 40 years ago.

A commemorative worship service, to be held at St. Mark's United Methodist Church immediately following the W. T. Handy Convocation, has been planned by a committee which includes several members of the clergy who played important community and church roles in 1960 during the school crisis.

Committee member Rev. Robert F. Harrington, pastor emeritus of Mount Zion UMC in New Orleans, recalls his church's involvement at the time of public school integration. "We pastors were doing what we could to foster positive growth in race relations. Rev. Andy Foreman, a local pastor who played a significant role, had already been a guest speaker at Mount Zion UMC for several years prior to school integration in 1960," said Harrington.

The role played by Rev. Andy Foreman in the controversial integration process ultimately drew international press coverage. Taunted by jeer-

ing housewives, Foreman defied a white student boycott by taking his daughter Pamela Lynn to newly integrated William Frantz School in New Orleans.

Shortly after public school integration began Nov. 14, 1960, just Pamela and three other white students were in attendance at William Frantz School. The only African American child assigned to the school, Ruby Bridges, sat bravely in her new classroom as controversy of great historical significance swirled around her.

Rev. John Winn, committee chair for the Nov. 11 event, said, "The service will begin in the patio of St. Mark's UMC, with the St. Mark's Jazz Band leading a procession into the sanctuary."

Rev. Harrington reflected on the importance of the anniversary celebration. "It is always important to remember the events of history. Recalling what happened in the sixties renews our resolve in the continued quest for perfect unity. In 1960, we were inspired by the courageous efforts of those willing to step up and be counted. We continue working to complete the circle that began over 40 years ago," said Harrington.

La. United Methodist Women elect president at annual meeting

BY JAN CLARKE

Only three days after the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, the Louisiana Conference United Methodist Women held its 28th Annual Meeting at St. Timothy on the North Shore in Mandeville.

From the words of comfort at the opening invocation given by Catherine Hogue from Slidell First United to the message of God's loving assurance at the closing communion service given by Rev. James Mitchell, Senior Minister at St. Timothy, evidence of the shocking world events made its mark on the September 14-15 event.

Due to the national crisis which caused the interruption of airline travel, banquet speaker Cheryl Hemmerle, Women's Division Executive Secretary for Teens and College/University Women based in New York, was unable to appear.

Bishop William Hutchinson, already on hand to offer the meditation prior to the banquet, graciously stepped in to offer an inspirational message based on the meeting's theme, "I am the vine, you are the branches."

To stay connected to the vine, Bishop Hutchinson encouraged the group of 421 registrants to "listen through Jesus' ears, observe through Jesus' eyes, voice love through Christ-like words, and to extend yourself to others through the spirit of Jesus."

His wife, Kay, also provided inspiration at the banquet singing "The Way of the Lord." Between business sessions representatives were treated to special music by the Jazz Band from St. Mark's Community Center in New Orleans and the Hartzell Mt. Zion Youth Rappers. Song leader Annette Fortuna from

Aldersgate UMC in Slidell, offered a timely rendition of "God Bless America". She was joined by audience members who stood spontaneously, holding hands raised in united prayer.

In an historic move, the Nominating Committee recommended Lueburda Meyers from Shreveport to serve as the first African-American president of the Louisiana Conference UMW. Other incoming officers elected to two-year terms include Frances Patton from Vidalia to serve as Secretary, Carolyn Colvin from Shreveport to serve on Education and Interpretation, Jo Traweek from West Monroe to serve on Membership Nurture and Outreach, and Brenda Canty from Baton Rouge to serve as Communications Coordinator.

In a moving pledge service, treasurers from all nine districts in the state presented a symbolic basket of grapes to indicate their donations to the Women's Division of the General Board of Global Ministries:

Joyce Thibodeaux pledged \$19,000 from the Acadiana District to provide training at a youth and women's center in Cambodia.

Betty Rainey pledged \$29,000 from the Alexandria District to support counseling for children and families at St. Mark's Community Center in New Orleans.

Francis Sibley pledged \$49,000 from the Baton Rouge District to support refugee women in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Nell Hayes pledged \$42,000 from the Lake Charles District to provide kindergarten programs at two Palestinian refugee camps.

Sandy DeCelle pledged \$29,000 from the Monroe District to support medical



Louisiana Conference United Methodist Women recently elected Lueburda Meyers, center, as the group's new president.

ministries of the Methodist Church in India.

Sally Uhl pledged \$40,000 from the New Orleans District to support the Methodist Women's Welfare Center in Korea.

Jerry Lee pledged \$21,500 from the North Shore District to support the Wesley Community Center in Houston.

Jane Sherman pledged \$27,500 from the Ruston District to support Global Health Action Worldwide.

Mary Huff pledged \$44,250 from the Shreveport District to support Integral Development Education in Chile.

If anything, the events of the week put the members in a somber mood,² said

Tillie Shows, North Shore District President and coordinator of the event.

It was very moving to me to see people actively seeking out our prayer garden and kneeling at the altar railing between sessions.

St. Matthew's, Metairie, consecrates Family Life Center

St. Matthew's United Methodist Church in Metairie, pastored by Dr. H.A. (Peter) Harrington, consecrated in July one of the largest building expansions in recent years in the New Orleans District: a two-story Family Life Center with classrooms, offices, Great Hall, plus one and a half acres of paved parking. After 2 ½ years of fundraising, study, and preparation, the 850-member congregation, in a two-hour, festive consecration service, celebrated a major commitment to a strong United Methodist presence in the New Orleans region. Assisting in the consecration were Bishop William W. Hutchinson and District Superintendent Rev. Freddie C. Henderson.

The consecration included testimonials and remembrances from previous pastors and parishioners, custom-designed Pentecost stoles for the clergy, and a wide variety of mementos for all dignitaries of the occasion.

Amidst two different choirs, Children's Bells, and humorous skits, Bishop Hutchinson declared the St. Matthew's United Methodist Family Life Center was "consecrated to God and open for the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit."

St. Matthew's was founded in 1958, as the entire New Orleans region strained for new land on which to build communities and suburbs. In what surely represents the modern version of the Oklahoma Land Rush, thousands of acres of marsh and swampland northwest of New Orleans were drained, settled, and countless homes, schools, and shopping centers were laid out in what was to become the largest single residential community in the state. Because the land was pasture-like marsh and marsh grass, the region was given the name "Metairie", the French word for "meadow."

The first facilities were a multi-use Sanctuary/Fellowship Hall, containing three classrooms, and two outbuildings containing three more. Like most churches in that explosive growth era, St. Matthew's grew rapidly, reaching 1300 members almost overnight. Some years later, as the sprawling region settled into a more permanent and mature community, the congregation declined and leveled off.

Over time, the original facilities built in 1958, began to evidence wear and tear. In 1968, St. Matthew's erected a single-story youth/educational facility, containing eight classrooms and a central open area, to be used for Christian education and a new day school and Mother's Day Out.

In 1981, a beautiful new sanctuary was built, replacing the original interim facility which became solely a dining and staging area. The new sanctuary was dedicated in December, 1997, by Bishop Dan Solomon. In his dedicatory remarks, in which the note was symbolically burned, Bishop Solomon said, "If a church is to be looking to the future, you should enjoy your debt-free circumstances . . . but not for more than a matter of months."

The leadership took that challenge to heart, and the new St. Matthew's Family Life Center replaces all of the original campus from 1958, except the Early Learning Center/Classrooms built in 1968. In addition to the Family Life Center, 1.5 acres of lighted, paved parking was added to the site. The St. Matthew's congregation owns the second largest parcel of land in the New Orleans District, and much of it now offers beautiful and useful facilities, all centrally-located.

The church offers a 140-student Early Learning Center, holding infants and children through age four.

Many of the current children's parents were themselves children in the St. Matthew's Early Learning Center, and the Center has a waiting list at every age level.

The Family Life Center is a two-story, 26,000-square foot facility, with an elevator. The bottom floor offers new offices, classrooms, and an expansive Choir/Bride's Room. The hallmark of the building is a 2900-square foot Great Hall and commercial kitchen, to be used for large gatherings, dinners, and special presentations and plays. The second floor offers new classrooms and extensive storage.

All but one of the new Family Life Center classrooms are already taken, and the Early Learning Center classrooms are planned for future educational expansion.

Programming at St. Matthew's includes Disciple, I, II, III, and IV and Christian Believer. A multitude of short-term studies and focus groups make up a weekday ministry that includes Narcotics Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous, Scout Troops, DivorceCare, and "Moms On The Run", a monthly renewal and devotional fellowship time for grandmothers and mothers trying to balance family, home and life. October 12-13, the congregation will celebrate its 20th Annual Craft Fair, which draws crafters from five states, and offers a major fund-raising opportunity for the congregation.

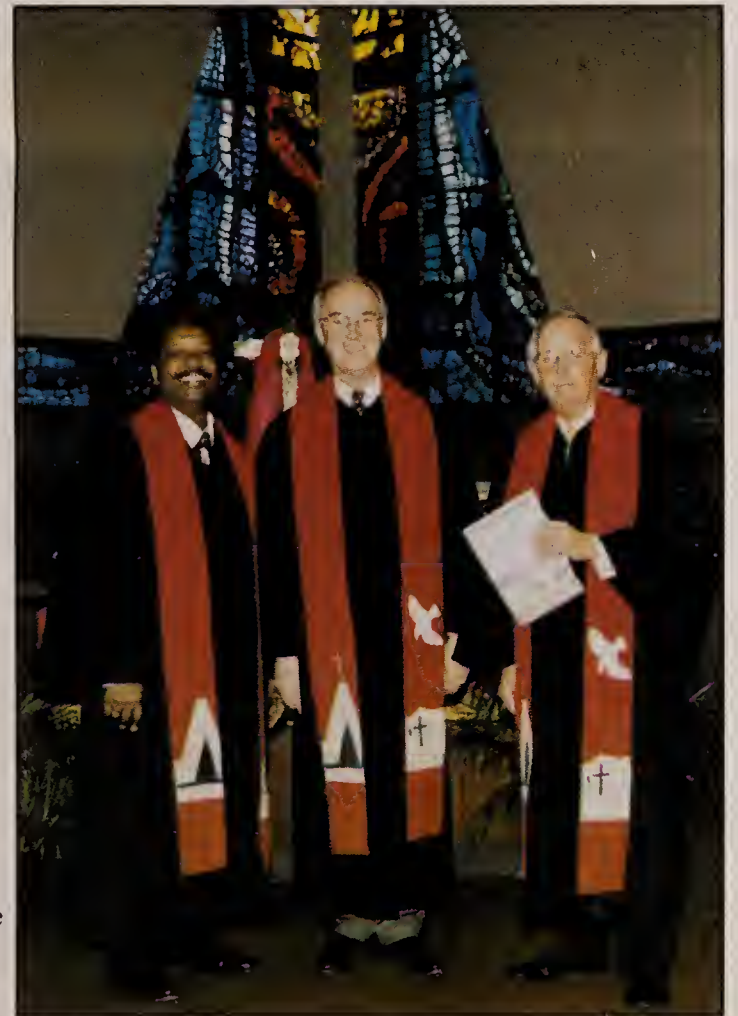


A new Family Life Center is the latest addition to St. Matthew's United Methodist Church in Metairie. The two-story building includes classrooms, offices, Great Hall, plus one and a half acres of paved parking and was consecrated this summer. Below: New Orleans District Superintendent Freddie Henderson and Bishop William Hutchinson were on hand to celebrate the consecration with pastor Dr. H.A. Harrington.

Over 1,000 crafters and guests will be on the property every second weekend in October, searching for strictly handmade creative expressions.

In the past six years, St. Matthew's has become a significant Cursillo congregation, adding new pilgrims with every Cursillo gathering. The Junior/Senior High Youth Group has grown rapidly and is now housed on the second floor of the Family Life Center.

Drawing upon his text from Luke 9, "Whoever puts his hands to the plow and looks back is not fit...", Bishop Hutchinson said, "If ever there was a congregation that is not looking back, but is claiming every moment of the future in the name of effective ministry for Christ, St. Matthew's is the example!"



Bethany member appointed to national UMW group

The Women's Division of the Board of Global Ministries has selected Gennith Johnson of Bethany United Methodist Church to serve on the 2001-03 College/University Consultative Group for United Methodist Women. This group is an outgrowth of the 2000 national Gathering of Teens and College Women and will choose the direction in which this initiative will go for the next two years. Johnson is a student at Hampton University in Virginia and represents

the New Orleans District, the Louisiana Conference and the South Central Jurisdiction.

Johnson has worked with various mission projects of the United Methodist Women, including Children's Easter Egg Hunt, mission fundraising, feeding students at Tulane Campus Ministry and soup kitchen ministry Sunday. As president of the youth, she organized teen discussions and involved the youth in civic, educational and social activities at

Lafon Nursing Home and the Methodist Home for Children. She has been a Vacation Bible School teacher and has served as church school secretary for two years prior to leaving for college.

As a member of the drama club, Johnson was chosen to participate in numerous plays which were performed at Bethany and Lafon Nursing Home. She has been a certified lay speaker for nearly three years and was one of the youngest to receive certification.

Send your church's stories to the New Orleans District Communication Advisor:

Dian Kent
837 Sumner St.
New Orleans, LA 70114
(504) 528-2219
Fax: (504) 328-2265



District task force focuses on rural and small churches

Following the promise made by Jesus that where two or more are gathered in His name, there He will be among them, the Rural and Small Church Task Force of the Lake Charles District is busy focusing on strategies to help build our smallest and most endangered churches in our district.

A centerpiece of their effort is the upcoming "Nuts and Bolts Workshop for Rural and Small Churches" which the district will host on Saturday, April 6, 2002, at the Kinder United Methodist Church. Workshops will be held on six areas of special concern to our small churches, including youth, music ministry, evangelism, and visioning for the future.

More details will be coming soon. We are offering this workshop to anyone in the conference with concern for our small and rural churches. Saving and strengthening the rural church is one of the primary focuses of the Lake Charles District. Across the conference, 70 percent of our churches fit into this category, and many of them face closure in the upcoming years unless something is done to save them. Our task force remains in prayer for these churches. Our task force is being lead by our district superintendent, Dr. Douglas Ezell, and by Rev. Darryl Tate, chairman of Town and Country Ministries for the Louisiana Conference.

Members of the Rural and Small Church Task Force are Leon Boggs, Wayne Taylor, Truman Stagg, Jerry Johnson; seated: District Superintendent Doug Ezell, Lisa Turnbull, Tommy Bergeron, Darryl Tate, and Carolyn Valentine.



Lake Charles District plays active role in Russia ministry

BY LARRY MASON

The year was 1991 and the Berlin Wall fell. Soon thereafter United Methodist Churches organized food lifts to Ekaterinburg, Russia. University Church in Lake Charles participated, as did many other Methodist churches. The Kingdom Sunday school class continued to periodically study and stay informed of activities in Russia.

Members of this class attended Russia Initiative "Consultations" and after attendance at our second Consultation, we became a sponsor church for the "Good News" church in Moscow. We would later meet Nina Smirnova, the pastor of the Good News Church in February, 2000 at the RI Consultation in Atlanta.

In 1999, the GBGM announced the "Open World" program. The GBGM, Library of Congress and Rotarian International organizations sponsored "Open World." This program brought politically influential Russians to the US to view and learn about our democratic processes. God had delivered this opportunity and we agreed to host 14 Russians.

In September 1999, 14 anxious Russians met their equally anxious host families at the Lake Charles airport. In the following 10 days we all bonded very closely. We were specifically told not to push religion but were able to witness



our Christian beliefs via our daily activities. We were pleased to find out we had much in common with our new friends. Then they left – our new friends, the visitors we had been preparing for since 1991 – they just got on a plane and they were gone!

The void ached but the void would be filled because shortly thereafter God sent us to Russia.

It took a while to get everything arranged both logistically and spiritually. We were very fortunate to be joined by

six members from First UMC of Iowa, including pastor David DeWitt. We over planned, under planned and kept planning away until we departed on our VIM trip on May 24, 2001. Our group consisted of Karen McMillan, Phyllis Scott, Joe Bowers, Mickey and Bob Shannon, Diane and Larry Mason, David Conner, Phillip and Marlene Miller, Bob and Nelda Monk and David and Stephen DeWitt.

Upon arrival in Moscow, several "Open World," Church and other friends met us. What a wonderful feeling to see familiar faces in an unfamiliar airport!

The objectives of our trip were to establish e-mail communication, spiritually bond with the congregation and to determine how each church could help each other.

With money from fundraisers we purchased a computer for the Good New Church and e-mail is getting very close to reality. We met with their church council and discussed how we could help each other. We will continue our prayer partner relationship, both personal and corporate. We will also provide them with praise music to use with their youth.

We were very fortunate to have friends both in the church and in government. This afforded us varying religious and governmental opportunities. While there we attended and participated in worship services, visited an orphanage, had talks with various government officials including members of local, district and national Dumas (Russian for governing body).

We heard the leaders talk of their challenges – they are not unlike ours. We enjoyed fellowship in homes, toured cultural exhibits and attended performances.

We heard a Russian Military band

play "You are my Sunshine" and were in awe when a rainbow appeared over the Kremlin the first time we entered Red Square. We arrived, we witnessed, we made friends, and we were emotionally moved many times by the spirit and then we returned on June 4 – changed forever and wondering what God would call us to do next. God will send us again.

Russia is a country of proud people. It is also a country that is struggling to regain the Christianity that was driven underground in 1917. In the last year over 30 new Methodist churches have been organized in Russia. Many of these are in need of supportive congregations in order to help them become established.

There are many formidable political and socio-economic issues to overcome. The Good News church has been forced to move locations 3 times in the last year.

It is important to quickly seize upon the opportunity to help the Russian Methodist church become better established and grow. There is a huge opportunity to make Disciples of Christ in Russia.

We would love to share our story and witness with you. An excellent multimedia presentation is available for viewing. Please prayerfully consider either personally or via your Missions Committee getting involved in the promotion of this rich ministry. If you wish to further discuss, desire to see the presentation, hear the witness or if you would like to become involved in the Russian Ministry it is as easy as calling Mike McLaurin, pastor University UMC, Lake Charles at (337) 477-2003 or Larry Mason – Chairperson Russia Ministry Team – (337) 477-9749. We look forward to assisting you.

Send your church's stories to the District Communication Advisor:

Constance Handy
2706 Walden Dr.
Lake Charles, LA 70607
(337) 491-2331
handyjrr@aol.com

Northern Ireland shares experience with terrorism

BELFAST, Northern Ireland (UMNS) – Beryl Kelly knows all about the human toll of “collateral damage.”

Fifteen years ago, the Methodist laywoman was caught in an ambush as she was getting her car out of the garage for a family outing. The blast from a nearby rocket launcher tore through her inner ear, leaving her unconscious and bleeding. Years later, she is still being treated for increasing pain and hearing problems.

But Kelly was not the object of the attack. The Irish Republican paramilitary group, the IRA, was trying to hit a “military” target, British army troops on patrol. Kelly was what is sometimes called “collateral damage,” a civilian who had the bad luck to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Despite this and other experiences along Belfast’s volatile Springfield Road, Kelly resisted the bitterness that drove many Protestants to move away or turn against their Catholic neighbors. Her neighbors were a godsend, not the enemy, according to this mother of five.

“When a pipe bomb would go off, or there was trouble out in front of the

house, my neighbors would lift my children over the back hedge and let them sleep in their houses,” she said. “My children loved it because they had bunk beds.”

Ask Kelly what lessons she has learned in 30-plus years of living with the terrorism and violence of “The Troubles” and she does not hesitate for a moment.

“Helping each other was the key to it all,” she told United Methodist News Service. “We never asked whether anyone was Catholic or Protestant. We all just saw a need and we met it.”

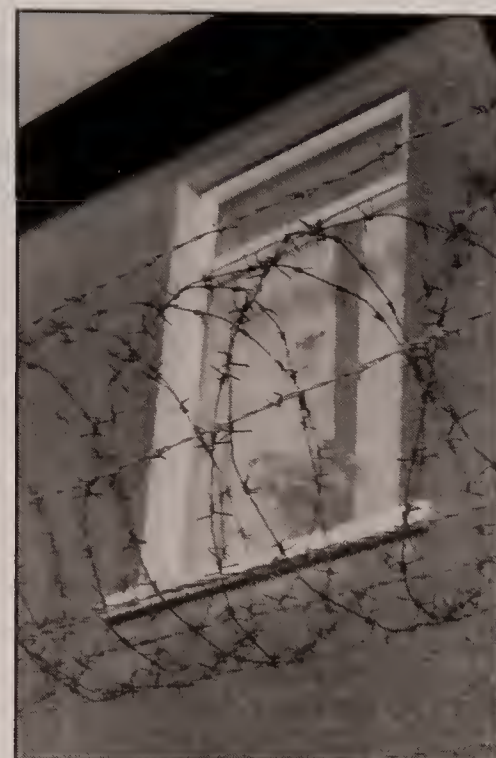
During the last three decades, nearly 4,000 people have died in the conflict that has pitted Catholic against Protestant in Northern Ireland and spawned paramilitary or terrorist groups on both sides of the religious divide. A fragile peace process struggles to move conflict on from military to political solutions. But terrorism continues to be part of the fabric of life in Northern Ireland.

“If we had only listened 30 years ago,” reflected the Rev. Harold Good, president of the Irish Methodist Conference

and member of Northern Ireland’s Human Rights Commission. “Even the best people in our churches have said we should just go in there with force and sort it all out. But it’s not that simple. ... We’ve learned there is no military solution to our problem.”

Catholic Brendan Bradley lost a younger brother, an older sister, an uncle, a nephew and a cousin in the Troubles, killed by people on all sides of the conflict. Bradley now spends most of his time at the Survivors of Trauma Center that he helped to found in North Belfast. Outside the center, there is the frequent sound of police surveillance helicopters keeping an eye on one of Belfast’s most violent areas. Inside, the center offers everything from one-to-one advice and counseling to after-school programs for neighborhood children.

As Bradley sat helping an 8-year-old boy with math homework, he explained that in his experience, two wrongs never make a right. When responding to terrorism, a bit of ‘righteousness’ and a whole lot of ‘wrongness’ is a righteousness that is too costly, said Bradley.



A UMNS photo by Kathleen LaCamera

‘PEACE LINE’ – Flowers blooming in a windowsill stand in sharp contrast to barbed wire along the “Peace Line” at Springfield Road, which divides Catholic and Protestant communities in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Mission, from page 1

Institute in Houston, recently said that tragic events of this kind produce a sense of pain, fear and diminishment. However, he explained, there is a corresponding emotion of equal value that challenges us to enlargement—to stretch ourselves.

“The challenge before us is to enlarge

our territory, as stated in the popular ‘Prayer of Jabez’ found in I Chronicles, chapter four. He prayed for God to bless him and enlarge his border. The faith of Jabez is a great example for us as we go forward, offering care, love and healing to those much less fortunate than we,” said Norman.

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General Board of Global Ministries • The United Methodist Church



Good Samaritan Sunday

Your contributions on October 28 benefit three crucial Louisiana Conference institutions.

Methodist Hospital treats 'whole patient' – physical, emotional, spiritual

John Wesley delivered messages of God's goodness and love with a hands on approach to people and their daily needs. More than 250 years ago, the founder of the Methodist Church ministered to the sick, the hungry, the homeless, the poor and the imprisoned as he taught them about the life and teachings of Jesus (Matthew 25:34-40).

The connection between physical well-being and religion is at the very heart of the history of healthcare. For thousands of years, spiritual leaders and their followers have recognized that addressing the needs of the soul, particularly in times of illness, is as significant and as important as physical needs.

"At Methodist Hospital, we are concerned with the well-being of the whole patient, physically, emotionally and spiritually," says Chaplain Nelson. "Total patient care incorporates the best care for the body, the mind and the soul. We know that the most productive care is associated with a strong faith. Ongoing studies indicate that those with a spiritual foundation not only cope with illness better but often recover faster."

As the only Christian-affiliated hospital in the greater New Orleans area and one of few remaining in Louisiana, Methodist Hospital strengthens its commitment to the care of the soul on a daily basis. "Prayer at Methodist is encouraged," notes Chaplain Nelson. "It's not unusual to see Hospital staff and physicians praying with their patients and offering words of spiritual comfort. The Hospital chaplains are available 24-hours a day for patients, their families, visitors and the staff to provide spiritual comfort and guidance."

The Good Samaritan Fund, supported by donations collected twice a year from members of the Louisiana Conference, is one method of demonstrating the Methodist faith while helping patients and their families with the

unexpected expenses and financial demands associated with illness and injury. "Established with the opening of Methodist Hospital, more than 33 years ago, the Fund has proved to be an economical and spiritual gift to hundreds of individuals, thanks to the generosity of Methodist Church members."

"Helping people in times of need is fundamental to the ministry of the United Methodist Church and to our hospital," Chaplain Nelson explains. "The Fund provides financial assistance for a patient's physical concerns while our prayers and counseling support the spiritual aspects of healing."

In addition to providing financial assistance to those in need, Methodist Hospital extends its religious commitment with educational programs for the community and its spiritual leaders. In recognition of the connection between the soul, the mind and the body, Methodist Hospital celebrates Medicine and Religion Week each October with several special events including Clergy Appreciation Day.

"The Orleans Parish Medical Society established Medicine and Religion Week more than 20 years ago in recognition of the need for divine guidance in the care of the sick and injured," says Chaplain Nelson. "At Methodist, we recognize that week with spiritual sharing, an educational seminar, and tours of the Hospital."

"Methodist Hospital was established through the efforts, dedication and concern for the individual by members of the Methodist Church in Louisiana," she continues. "In an era when a Christian-based healthcare facility is unique, Methodist Hospital continues to hold steadfast in its commitment to answer the community's healthcare needs within a Christian environment. Since the Hospital first opened in 1968, Methodist clergy - and those of other faiths - have



Methodist Hospital Chaplain Judy Nelson offers a word of spiritual comfort to one of the many patients she visits daily in her role as a healthcare minister. The only Christian-affiliated hospital in the greater New Orleans area, Methodist maintains a constant focus on healing the body, the mind and the soul.

been invited and encouraged to take an active part in the care of our patients. Clergy Appreciation Day acknowledges that open invitation and is also a 'thank you' to those who share our concern for spiritual health."

Over the years, Clergy Appreciation Day at Methodist Hospital has included healthcare screenings and presentations on such subjects as the emotional and spiritual dimensions of aging, end of life care, spirituality from a physician's perspective, hypnosis, stress management, guilt and grace, nutrition, empathy, childhood abuse and adult survivors, and the self determination act.

"Methodists, by example of John Wesley, have the responsibility and spiri-

tual commitment to help those who cannot help themselves," Chaplain Nelson continues. Today, members of the Louisiana Conference of The United Methodist Church continue the tradition, the spiritual and corporate mission, of John Wesley through Methodist Hospital. "The Hospital was founded by members of the Gentilly Methodist Church in New Orleans in answer to a specific need to care for the sick," Chaplain Nelson says. "From its very beginning, however, the mission was more than just caring for the ill and injured. Methodist Hospital, reflecting the philosophy of the Methodist Church, cares for the whole person – body, mind and soul."

Peoples Community Center makes a difference for kids

Peoples Community Center in New Orleans believes in the proven theory that children who are exposed to a structured learning environment are better prepared and equipped to adjust to the main stream of future schooling. Peoples Center continues to demonstrate its belief that all children, regardless of financial status, want and have the ability to learn. All children need a chance to grow and develop into productive young boys and girls and ultimately productive men and women.

It is for these reasons that Peoples strives to give each child who enters its doors an opportunity to develop their skills. Children's ages range from six months to four years old and ages five through 12 during summer camp.

For over 79 years, Peoples has maintained its mission to make a difference.



Two and three year-olds from Peoples Community Center enjoy story time at the New Orleans Public Library.

Lafon Home prepares for annual golf tourney

The ninth annual Buford Jordan Golf Tournament benefitting the Lafon Home in New Orleans will be held Monday, Nov. 5, at Bayou Oaks in City Park.

Registration for the four man scramble is at 11 a.m., with a noon tee off. The fee to play is \$75 per player, which includes greens fees, cart and refreshments. Prizes will be awarded for first, second and third place finishes, along with closest-to-the-hole and hole-in-one.

Founder Buford Jordan, a former New Orleans Saints football player has enlisted the participation of former Saint Richard Cooper and news anchor Norman Robinson for the event.

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Methodist Women's Center affiliated physicians:

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New Orleans, LA 70127
245-1546

Mohammed Bey, Jr., MD
6010 Bullard Ave.
Suite 210
New Orleans, LA 70128
246-1149

Washington Bryan, MD
3720 Prytania Street
New Orleans, LA 70115
891-3711

Oscar del Portal, MD
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Suite 540
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244-7177

Nadine Ford, MD
5640 Read Blvd.
Suite 880
New Orleans, LA 70127
242-7564

Crittty Hymes, MD
8369 Dwyer Road
New Orleans, LA 70126
246-8860

Frances Ivker, MD
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New Orleans, LA 70128
244-3345

Anne Marie Linhuber, MD
710 W. Genie St.
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271-5966

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VOL. 2, NO. 20

BATON ROUGE, LA

October 26, 2001

First phase of Igniting Ministry draws to a close

The first phase of the Igniting Ministry initiative in our Conference has drawn to a close. Reminders of the campaign still linger in the form of church banners, yard signs and billboards scattered throughout the conference. The billboard message, "For all the days that end in why," reminds us of the vital role played by The United Methodist Church and other denominations on Sept. 11, 2001 when disaster struck our nation. Evaluation forms completed by



churches in the Conference reflect that most believe Igniting Ministry certainly increased the visibility of The United Methodist Church. Many also agreed it was providential that our first national media campaign aired during one of the nation's worst tragedies in history.

A letter sent to the Igniting Ministry office in Nashville gave campaign evaluators a hint as to the impact of the September television campaign. Rev. Bill Shillady of Park Avenue United Methodist Church in New York wrote, "Yesterday, I had the opportunity to be in ministry with relief workers, fire personnel and police at 'ground zero.' ... (a Red Cross volunteer) said to me, 'Wow, you're the people with the ads about

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Pumpkin Patch

The lawn at First United Methodist Church in Monroe bursts with the orange of its Pumpkin Patch, a familiar fall sight at churches around the Conference. Mark and Candice Hagwood, above with infant Carly, follow their son Spencer in the hunt for the perfect pumpkin. Precious pumpkin look-alike Michael Baker strikes a pose, left. Caroline Grubbs, right, who attends St. Paul's UMC in Monroe, came out to the patch with her mother, Sandy.



ON THE JOURNEY

Some Sense of Normalcy

I've just returned from Washington, D.C. I went there for the fall meeting of the General Board of Church and Society. I must admit that when I boarded the plane here in Baton Rouge, bound for Atlanta and ultimately to Dulles International Airport, I had a bit of a flutter in my stomach and heart! I didn't really want to be flying, and especially I didn't want to fly to our nation's capitol at this point in time. The trip up, however, was one of the smoothest I've ever had. That smoothness was both in terms of flight and in terms of negotiating airports.

We met in the Dulles Hyatt Hotel, located in Reston, Virginia, a calm, peaceful, beautiful town. But, in spite of that peaceful

setting I spent most of the meeting in a state of discomfort. I'm ashamed to admit that! But it is true. I just wanted to come back to Baton Rouge where I feel safe and secure. Of course nothing happened that was even remotely threatening. But I just had that uneasy sense (I think they call it "terror") that something dreadful was going to take place while I was there.

When I went back to Dulles International to come home I was even more ill at ease. As I was getting dressed that morning I had heard that the al-Qaeda network had announced that people in the United States should not fly on airplanes or live in tall buildings. That's all I needed for a parting blessing! I sat in the air terminal and scrutinized every person who was preparing to board a plane. I was just certain that some of them had the capacity to do harm. What a truly paranoid feeling that is!

Baton Rouge never looked more beautiful than it did as we flew over the lush green landscape and landed safely on the runway. I walked outside the doors of the terminal and basked in the sunlight and gave great thanks to God that I was safely home. I just wanted to return to some sense of normalcy. Isn't that what we all are wanting about now? When will our "normal" life resume?

Some of that normality hit me this morning as I returned to my desk with its piles of mail. Some of that mail was about significant things. Some of it was laughingly petty. Some of it was pure junk. Some of it was just "stuff" that occupies much of our time but has no relevancy for much of anything. But it was normal! Yea!

One of the pieces of mail had to do with something I consider very exciting. I want you to know about it!

On November 29, 2001 a group of us are meeting in New Orleans to dis-



Bishop William W. Hutchinson

"Now is the time for us to be more 'normal' than ever and plant more churches than ever so that the world will come to know the Prince of Peace."

cuss the possibility of the formation of a new Vietnamese United Methodist Church in Louisiana. Two people are coming from the General Board of Global Ministries who will meet with representatives of our Board of Church Extension, a couple of our district superintendents, some of our other Conference personnel and myself. Now this is the normal scene I like! Working on the expansion of the church so the good news of Jesus Christ can be spread to all.

Kay and I learned while on our trip to Vietnam in August that the Vietnamese caucus in the United States had identified New Orleans as a city that needed a Vietnamese United Methodist Church. This meeting is a follow-up to that conversation. I am absolutely thrilled at the possibility of this becoming a reality.

When we were in Vietnam we learned of the necessity for the church to be an underground entity there. The government is totally against the furtherance of Christianity and makes great threats against those who would mention the name of Jesus or try and bring anyone into the Christian faith. For us to help sustain the church in Vietnam is a great logistical challenge. But, we can freely and openly build a church for Vietnamese here in this country with no fear of any kind. Praise God for our freedom of worship!

Now that's the sense of normality for which my heart longs. The normal freedom to go about our business of changing hearts and lives in the name of Jesus and of building fellowships of worship where people can express their praise of God. And we can do all of that without the terror that someone will harm us if we do it!

I'm concerned that our "normal" everyday life will not return for some time to come. But I refuse to allow the church of the risen savior to be terrorized into doing nothing in the meantime! In fact, now is the time for us to be more "normal" than ever and plant more churches than ever so that the world will come to know the Prince of Peace, and we can lay down our sword and shield and study war no more. Oh, it is a "normalcy" devoutly to be wished.

In Christ's love,

Bill Hutchinson



The South-central Jurisdiction College of Bishops held a retreat Oct. 1-3, at Dillard University in New Orleans. While the bishops were in retreat, their wives were hosted by Kay Hutchinson for local sight-seeing, including a visit to the D-Day Museum, a riverboat cruise and a tour of the gardens of historical Longview. A highlight for the group was a tour of Dillard University and lunch at the president's residence. Photographed in front of the residence of Dr. Michael L. Lomax, university president, were front row, Marilyn Oden, Ruth Handy and Joye Chamness; second row, Lavell Owen, Joy Solomon, Jewell Moncure and Zoe Wilson; back row, Ann Hearne, Etta Mae Mutti, Martha Hardt, Twila Bryan, Nancy Oliphint, Kay Hutchinson, Mackie Norris and Julia Wilke.



Academy commissions spiritual directors

The first class of spiritual directors in the Louisiana Conference have been commissioned by the Academy for Spiritual Leadership. During a two-year process they attended a series of six retreats which were held at the Conference Center in Woodworth. Leading the retreats were Dr. Norman Shawchuck, a United Methodist minister and consultant from North Dakota and Fr. Bob Doherty, a Jesuit priest, who teaches at the Campion Center just outside of Boston.

The sessions dealt with skills and practices of spiritual direction as well as training in leading spiritual formation retreats. Those commissioned are now available to meet with persons

seeking to deepen their faith journey by sharing with a spiritual director. Each session usually lasts about one hour, and is held every month or six weeks. It offers a safe place to meet and share with a director who can guide the person into a closer understanding of their relationship with God.

The Academy will soon be starting another training series in spiritual direction. If you would be interested in seeking out a spiritual director, or would like to know more about the training, contact the Academy Director, Rev. Carole Cotton Winn, 101 Byron Ct., Slidell, La., 70461, (985) 639-9531.

Igniting Ministry, *from page 1*

prayer during this time. I wish the Red Cross was as quick as you with such great commercials.' I thought you should know, people are watching..."

Indeed, people were watching. And banner numbers of people visited United Methodist Churches throughout the conference during the month of September.

It would be impossible to separate the visitors who came because of the events of Sept. 11 from those who came because of Igniting Ministry efforts; but United Methodist were ready to receive them. Perhaps the greatest gains due to the campaign cannot be measured by numbers of visitors and new members, but by the renewed enthusiasm experienced by many Conference churches as they prepared for Igniting Ministry and "Open House Month."

A post-campaign evaluation form received from Trinity United Methodist Church of Bunkie read, "The congregation experienced more love and harmony among its members as well as togetherness... (and) a renewed commitment to welcoming new people."

Rev. L. Darwin Brecheen of the Slaughter/Bluff Creek UMC charge wrote, "We have begun a concentrated effort to become a more visible ministry in our community."

Evaluation forms indicate that churches conference-wide added directional and promotional signage, spruced up landscaping, painted, recarpeted, and generally "fixed-up" in preparation for the campaign.

Churches like Welsh Memorial UMC in Vinton made special efforts to invite the public to worship. On Saturday, Sept. 8, 42 volunteers from the church gathered for breakfast and prayer before going door to door distributing 1,000 printed invitations to members of

the community not already associated with an established church. "We were so successful with the effort that we plan to have a similar evangelism effort once a quarter," said Rev. Jerry Johnson, pastor of Welsh Memorial UMC.

Many churches utilized door hangers bearing the Igniting Ministry theme to invite people to worship services. Prospective visitors were also invited to special choir performances, "Open House" meals, "fall festivals," neighborhood parties and introductory Sunday School classes.

Districts, church groups, and individual churches added radio spots, newspaper ads and even bumper stickers to the Igniting Ministry media mix which consisted of national cable spots, local network television buys and a conference wide billboard campaign.

The nationally produced television commercials were developed by using audience data collected through independent research by the Barna Research Group, focusing on individuals aged 25 to 54. Creative content for the commercials was primarily designed to foster among nonmembers a positive feeling and willingness to visit a United Methodist church.

Local churches attended special Igniting Ministry training on the regional, district and individual church levels. Welcoming and invitational techniques were then shared with congregations.

"(We) briefed adult classes on the campaign and the opportunity to reach the community," wrote Rev. Charlie Langford of Springhill UMC. "We inserted flyers in our bulletin and asked members to invite others," reported Rev. Becky Conner of Asbury UMC in West Monroe.

Suggestions for follow up on this ini-



Lakeview United Methodist Church in Shreveport held a fall festival Oct. 14, as part of its Igniting Ministry outreach. Originally scheduled for September, the event was postponed after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11. The church sent out brochures to the surrounding community. More than 300 people attended the event.

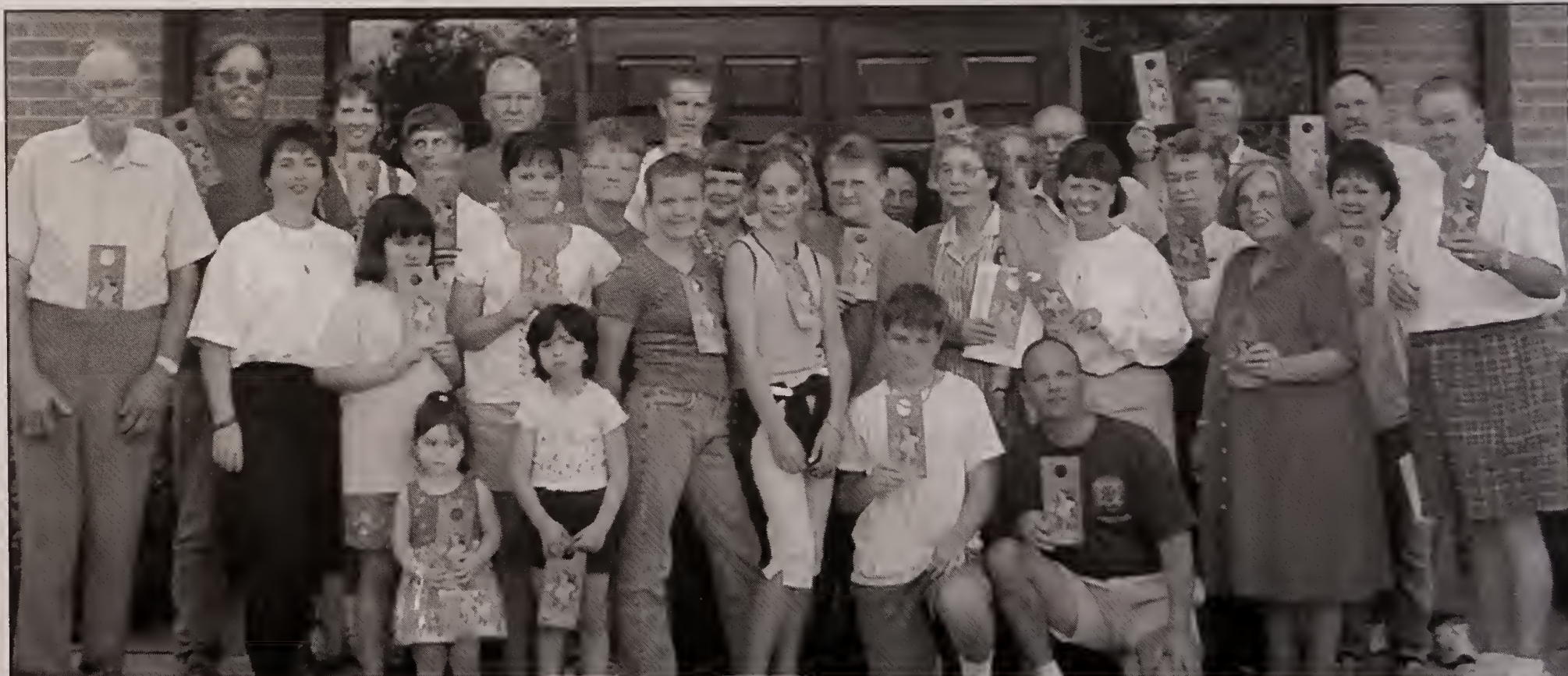
tial campaign included a wide variety of comments from local churches. Several congregations requested that an Igniting Ministry workshop designed specifically for small membership churches be offered. One evaluation proposed an annual "Open House" month in September for all United Methodist churches. First UMC of Baton Rouge offered this sentiment: "Keep the energy going!"

Several comments centered on shifting the focus for future Igniting Ministry efforts. "I think we need to continue the emphasis on evangelism. The t.v. commercials and billboards are good, but we need more emphasis on inviting people to church, sharing our

faith, and talking about Jesus and His effect on our lives," read one report.

Requests for grant funding for a second Igniting Ministry effort during the season of Lent 2002 are currently being drafted. The focus areas for this next wave of television advertising will be the Acadiana, Alexandria and Lake Charles districts.

"The best part of the program was the sense of renewed commitment to being a welcoming church," read the evaluation from Wesley UMC in Crowley. As at Wesley UMC, churches throughout the Louisiana conference continue to benefit from positive changes precipitated by Igniting Ministry.



Welsh Memorial United Methodist Church in Vinton used doorhangers and printed invitations to invite community members to worship with them as part of the Igniting Ministry campaign. Their efforts netted 11 new members for the church, a sizable percentage for his congregation, said pastor Rev. Jerry Johnson, above at right.



Stephanie Hamm, Kelsey Golson and Jessica Herbey enjoy their ice cream at the recent Old-Fashioned Ice Cream Social at Bethel United Methodist Church. Flavors ranged from country vanilla to lemon cream. Sue and Mike Fields organized the festivities.



On a recent Sunday morning, the "Guards for Christ" from the youth at North Highlands United Methodist Church began rounding up their "Prisoners for Christ," above. The youth finished the day with water skiing, a great start for the new youth season.



Three couples recently renewed their wedding vows at St. Paul United Methodist Church in Shreveport. Rev. Kenneth Fisher presided over the service for Hannah and Anderson Rose, married 63 years; Estella and Albert Moody, 60 years; and Mary E. and Willie A. Brown, 66 years.



On the Lake with the Lord

More than 35 children and staff members from the Methodist Children's Home in Ruston enjoyed a day of water sports, good food and fellowship this summer with First United Methodist Church in Coushatta and pastor Rev. Ellen Montegudo. After the day's festivities, each child was given a "prayer bear" embroidered with the phrase "On the Lake with the Lord."



The Cat in the Hat

During the month of September, the children's sermons at Bethel United Methodist Church were delivered by Jere Guillotte, right, in the guise of one of Dr. Seuss' most famous characters, the Cat in the Hat. The sermons used popular Dr. Seuss stories to relate parables from the Bible in a fresh and engaging way for children. Bethel also recently recognized two members of its Sunday School for four years of perfect attendance: Brandice Dykes and Devin Dykes. Matthew Register was also recognized for near perfect attendance. The students are pictured above with Sunday School Superintendent Elaine Whitten.



Asbury announces capital campaign

BY KATHERINE AYERS

Asbury United Methodist Church has announced a capital building campaign with the goal of raising funds to build a new sanctuary at its location north of I-220 on Airline Drive. Asbury first met in October 1989 at Bossier Parish Community College.

Asbury formed by combining members of Curtis Park United Methodist Church, and St. Stephen United Methodist Church and others from the communities of North Bossier City. Asbury entered its present structure in the summer of 1992. There is a multi-purpose building used now for classrooms and sanctuary.

Asbury has always been a church with a strong foundation in community outreach and mission projects, both locally and nationwide. That foundation has provided the basis for a warm, friendly and open church, which has

experienced continual growth over the years.

Senior Pastor Barry Hughes commented, "It is a real joy to be serving the Asbury family at this moment in their history."

"I inherit leadership in one of the most dynamic, fastest growing congregations in all of Louisiana Methodism. Together we will take this next step into the future of this fine church."

Send your church's stories to the District Communication Advisor:

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Stinky Feet and All

Students from the Vacation Bible School at Doyline United Methodist Church show off the t-shirts they earned by learning Bible verses. This year's theme was "Way to Go!" emphasizing various cities in the Holy Land and learning biblical truths. Helping, sharing and telling other about Christ were some of the topics.

The children learned and sang new songs, performing them during a closing skit. The favorite, "Stinky Feet," was a unanimous hit with the audience. A total of 202 stuffed animals were donated to Bear Huggs, where they will be refurbished and shared with less fortunate children. In addition, more than \$200 was collected to support St. Jude's Hospital.

Pleasant Valley UMC gets makeover

Pleasant Valley United Methodist Church is getting a makeover. Everything right down to the floors is being ripped up and refurbished. This 130-year-old church has seen many renovations and add-ons, such as the foyer and Sunday school rooms. But, because the building itself is so old, it began to deteriorate. The roof began leaking and other problems began occurring, so, after \$50,000 worth of damage, the decision was made to begin a major renovation. It has been said, according to Dottie Greene, member, that the roof began leaking after the Easter storms of 2000, and that the roof was actually sagging. Karl Wallace, a structural engineer, came in and assessed the damage and told the church members that even though the church was old and structural damage was apparent, the storms just helped to finish the damage. Of course, there were problems before the storms, such as shingle damage and damage to the vinyl around the eaves. The shingles that were on (the roof originally were all cypress wood shingles and the nails used to build the roof were hand-made square head nails. Over time, the shingles had been re-laid, but that still didn't help because of the age of the church.

Along with a new roof, the church is being totally revamped inside. Over the years, the church members have sheet-rocked the walls and put in carpet and air conditioning, but even that has to be redone. The walls have been stripped back to the original walls built in 1876. Even the sub-floors have to be redone because they did not extend all the way to the walls. Pastor Joe Hunter said when the contractor began to lay insulation, it was falling through the floor. As a result, the sub-floors are also being redone.

All in all, this small piece of history is getting a new face inside and out.

The history of this church is rich and colorful at times. It begins with a small group in 1871 that met in someone's home to hold services. In 1872, the small group became a church and a building was erected. Completion of the church building did not come until Oct. 21, 1876. According to the membership directory published in 1999, two acres of land were purchased to build the church from Lewis and Amanda Monzingo for \$5. This old church has seen many generations walk through its doors. Many weddings, and many families coming and going. The original church register, published in 1882, lists many of Pleasant Valley's pastors and church members. Gary and Dottie Greene are generation members of Pleasant Valley as well as the Hortman family and the Pevys. These generation members are still active in the church today.

The Methodist Church is required to keep a true and accurate record of all members and pastors, including why members left, weddings, births, deaths and baptisms. Many of the reasons for leaving the church starting from around 1896, were short and brief. Some of the reasons given were "dead," "gone," "no letter." Other explanations were "lost sight of," "withdrawn," or "transferred"

It is written beside one man's name, that he died by assassination. As the story goes, according to Greene, the man who was assassinated was killed over a poker game. Apparently, the man got into trouble and when it was time to pay up, he couldn't. As a result, he was killed. Another story passed on through the generations was about a man who was not a Methodist. He was a Christian man, but he would not come into the church to listen to the sermons, just because he wasn't a Methodist. Every Sunday, he would sit on the back porch and listen to the preacher preach a sermon, but he refused to set foot inside the church. Pleasant Valley also has a cemetery beside the church. The first person to be buried there was Elizabeth Hortman around 1872. Pleasant Valley UMC is nine miles north of Dixie Inn toward Cotton Valley.



Pleasant Valley United Methodist Church recently began major renovations on its 130-year-old structure after the roof started leaking and sagging.



Pastor Emeritus

On the occasion of his 80th birthday, the Administrative Council of Trinity United Methodist Church formally granted Dr. Douglas McGuire the title of Pastor Emeritus. Dr. McGuire served four appointments in the Ruston District from 1944-1985 including Bethel, Downsville, Mt. Nebo, Grace and Trinity churches. He also served as superintendent of the Ruston District. He pastored at Trinity UMC from 1960-71, during which time Trinity was relocated from downtown to its present site. He continues to serve and give himself to our community in both church-related ministries and service organizations.

Send your church's stories to the District Communication Advisor:

Rev. Joe Hamilton
P.O. Box 1658
Hodge, LA 71247
(318) 259-2647
djhamilton@iglide.net

Youth Fall Convocation

Youth from around the Louisiana Conference turned out for Fall Convocation Sept. 29 at the Conference Center in Woodworth. Nearly 900 registered for the event. Below, Rev. Darlene Moore-James, pastor of Hartzell-Mt. Zion United Methodist Church in Slidell, shares what it means to be a "Jesus Freak," the theme of the event and leads worshippers in communion. Erin Sheehan from Jackson UMC was one of the communion servers. At right, a member of the Wayne Kerr Band serves the Lord through his music and stirs up the crowd, below right. Among the rockin' Jesus Freaks were Johnathan Lynch from Grace UMC in Ruston, Jason Holland from Christ UMC in Shreveport and Michael Klaus from First UMC in Houma.



Methodists, Muslims express 'mutual respect'

LOS ANGELES (UMNS) – A United Methodist commission and two Muslim groups have issued a joint statement affirming a "common commitment to living together, under God, in the unity of mutual respect and compassion."

The statement was made public on Oct. 12, when members of the United

Methodist Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns visited the Islamic Center of Southern California.

Staff of the Muslim Public Affairs Council, based in Los Angeles and Washington, also were involved in the visit.

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Baton Rouge Methodist co-authors Advent devotional

Two friends from Baton Rouge have written and published a unique devotional book for the coming Advent season. Cherri Johnson, a member of First United Methodist Church, and Relma Hargus, a member of Broadmoor Baptist co-authored the booklet entitled "Advent Reflections".

"This is actually the second year Relma and I have produced such a book. Last year, we prepared an Advent devotional booklet for our friends for Christmas gifts. People really seemed to like it, and asked us to do another one," said Johnson.

Both ladies have worked with the St. James Center for Spiritual Formation in Baton Rouge, so they showed the book to their peers at the center, as well as to the clergy at their respective churches.

In order to get the project out on time, Hargus and Johnson starting working in July. "We would work independently, then collaboratively throughout."

Using an expanded format for this year's devotional booklet, Cherri's main contribution to the project is the poetry found throughout piece. The poems reflect the lectionary readings for the respective weeks of Advent.

"The poetry was created through personal journaling, soul work I was in the process of doing. It has become a part of

me now, and has truly blessed me," said Johnson.

Hargus wrote some of the poetry and was responsible for developing reflections and questions found in the devotional book. There is even a section devoted to the "how to's" of crafting an Advent wreath and related traditions.

The book's introduction states, "Although the reflection questions are geared toward using words-and space for recording your thoughts is provided-perhaps you might choose to create a dance, a work of art or piece of music to express yourself. Be creative!"

"This book is perfect for established covenant and small groups. It is also great for home devotionals," said Hargus.

The authors spoke about the significance of the artwork chosen for the book's cover. "A traditional Advent cover usually depicts a dark night with the Star of Bethlehem shining. This artwork appealed to us because the light is provided by the sun, shining down on a new day, representative of God's son in the world in its full glory."

The books are available for \$5 at Broadmoor Baptist, First UMC and University UMC in Baton Rouge or by writing to 11814 Coursey Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA, 70816.



Photo by Joshua Lewis

Relma Hargus, a member of Broadmoor Baptist, and Cherri Johnson, a member of First United Methodist Church in Baton Rouge, are the authors of 'Advent Reflections,' a devotional designed as a resource "to prepare for a season of spiritual birth and celebration of God's peace." Copies of the booklet may be ordered for Sunday School classes and other church study groups.

Shreveport churches form wheelchair ramp ministries

North Highlands United Methodist Church has started a wheelchair ramp-building ministry in the Shreveport and Northwest Louisiana area. One Saturday in September, about 15-20 men built their third ramp. Mitchell Timmons has said that we will be out once a month building a ramp, as long as there is a need. We have come a long way from the "Take It To The Streets" project in New Orleans! The ramp in the picture at right was being built at the Mooringsport United Methodist Church. The church needed a new and more accessible ramp. One 102-year old lady called and said she was thrilled to have a new ramp at the church!

Next stop: Oil City United Methodist Church! If you have any questions about the North Highlands Ramp Ministry call Rev. Sandi Huber at (318) 221-4716.

Thirteen men, women and youth from Summer Grove UMC in Shreveport built a wheelchair ramp for a local family earlier this year. Two elementary school children in the family have Muscular Dystrophy. Rev. Bryan Dauphin, pastor, says the idea came from reading about a similar project at First UMC in Slidell, where he was raised as a child. At least four more ramp-building projects are planned for the immediate future.



Shared Mission Focus on Young People offers grants for youth ministry

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (UMNS) — United Methodists involved in cutting-edge ministries with youth and young adults may obtain grants of up to \$15,000 from the denomination's four program agencies.

The grants are available under the auspices of the Shared Mission Focus on Young People, a global initiative of the denomination. They are designed to enable creative, life-transforming ministries with young people, said the Rev. Drew Dyson, the executive director.

The grants are being offered through the United Methodist boards of Church and Society, Global Ministries, Higher Education and Ministry, and Discipleship. Working collaboratively with general boards and agencies, annual and central conferences, and local

churches, the initiative seeks to "set flame" to a movement throughout the church that transforms how United Methodists think and do ministry with and for young people, Dyson said.

The money would assist local churches, annual conferences in the United States and central conferences abroad, cooperative parishes, ecumenical shared ministries, campus ministries, youth serving agencies, and United Methodist organizations working with churches in programs for youth and young adults.

Ministries may receive grants of up to \$15,000 per year for up to three years, Dyson said. Projects may be funded once or for the full three-year cycle. In the past, the focus supported 27 pilot projects and 12 mini-grant projects throughout the

United States and in the church's central conferences around the world.

The Shared Mission Focus on Young People began in 1996, as a result of General Conference legislation challenging the church to "reorder its priorities to better respond to the joys and pains of young people." During the first four years, a coordinating team worked to increase awareness of young people's needs.

The 2000 General Conference reaffirmed the program and continued its mandate. The focus, which had been accountable to the churchwide General Council on Ministries, was restructured and moved to the Board of Discipleship in Nashville.

The board elected a team that includes 23 international members,

ranging from teen-agers to older adults, and includes resource people from each of the church's boards and agencies. The team's 2001-2004 focus is to "develop a comprehensive/coordinated approach dedicated to enhancing the church's ministry with young people," Dyson said.

The team has established basic funding criteria, with additional guidelines set by each of the participating church-wide agencies. Grants will be awarded through the administrative processes of each board.

The deadline for applications for the first funding cycle is Jan. 15. For more information, contact the office of the Shared Mission Focus on Young People at (877) 899-2780, Ext. 1780, or by e-mail at smfyp@gbod.org.



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CONFERENCE MINISTRIES

VOL. 2, NO. 21

BATON ROUGE, LA

November 9, 2001

Dates, theme set for 2002 Annual Conference

The 2002 Louisiana Annual Conference, to be held June 2-5, next year will follow the theme "Faith Sharing." The event will explore how United Methodists share faith, both as clergy and as laity throughout the various stages of faith development.

Registration for the conference, to be held at Centenary College in Shreveport,

will begin Sunday, June 2 in the afternoon. An opening service of "hope and healing" will be led that evening by Bishop William W. Hutchinson.

To enhance the atmosphere of worship and community, the Conference Worship Committee recently solicited choirs and various other church music and arts groups to be among the wor-

ship leadership.

A conference choir comprised of lay persons and clergy in attendance will also perform at the event. Look for details on how to participate.

"As we prepare for annual conference, let us know that if our faith is ignited, then we can be united," said Bishop Hutchinson.

Methodist Hospital hosts Steppin' Out Gala

The Annual Steppin' Out Gala was recently held in celebration of Methodist Hospital's 33 years of service. This year's gala featured the nostalgic sounds of Bill Haley's Comets, Bobby Rydell and Lesley Gore.

Dr. and Mrs. Joseph Labat and Mr. and Mrs. Larry Wink served as co-chairs for the event.

Participants in the fundraising activity included Methodist Hospital Board Chairman Marian Eggerton and her husband, Bob; Methodist Hospital President Fred Young and his wife, Strelsa; Board Member Charles McHale and his wife, Betty; and Director of Pastoral Care Services Chaplain Judy Nelson.

All proceeds from the Steppin' Out Gala will benefit Methodist Hospital.

INSIDE

On the Journey /2



No more car washes!
Check out a new kind of fundraiser / Special Insert

□ Alexandria
District / 4



Photo by Joshua Lewis

Chaplain Rev. Barbara Duke, right, ministers to parents Margo and Thomas Badeaux at Woman's Hospital in Baton Rouge, where their son, William Thomas, is in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. "He's our little miracle," his mother says.

Chaplains serve outside traditional borders of church

One area of clergy ministry not often talked about is the role of the chaplain. Institutions most commonly served by chaplains include hospitals, prisons and the military. Chaplains fall under the category of Persons in Extension Ministries, along with campus ministers, district superintendents, and a host of miscellaneous positions of service to the church.

Rev. Barbara Duke, staff chaplain for Our Lady of the Lake Hospital in Baton Rouge, was ordained as deacon in 1982, and received elders orders in

1984. After serving a campus ministry and five pastoral charges, Duke completed courses in extension Clinical Pastoral Education while serving her last charge. "After completing a 15 month residency program at a hospital in Oklahoma City, I joined the pastoral care staff at Our Lady of the Lake in September of 1998. I am also contracted to provide 20 hours of service per week to Woman's Hospital in Baton Rouge," said Duke.

When asked to clarify the role of a chaplain, she explained, "It is more a

ministry of presence rather than theology. It is about providing care and support. Chaplains are privileged to be a part of very intimate moments in the lives of people who are suffering or grieving."

Rev. Jim Jones, who serves as chaplain to youthful offenders at Dixon Correctional Institute in Jackson, ministers to all inmates ages 14-19. "These inmates are juveniles that have been tried as adults and incarcerated in an adult facility. To arrive at Dixon, an

See Chaplains, page 3

ON THE JOURNEY

All Hallow's Eve

Once in a blue moon has happened tonight. It's Halloween and the ghosts and goblins are supposed to appear. We are in the phase of the moon that happens only rarely, the "blue moon". It is the perfect night for trick-or-treating. Cool. Moonlit. Calm. Houses with lighted porches and bowls of candy waiting. But little is happening at our house. There have been a few ghouls and princesses at our house, but very few. It's just not the same.

I remember cold and crisp nights when I would dress up in some home-made costume, would take my paper sack and fearlessly begin my trek from house to house. "Trick or Treat" I would say, and people would drop in popcorn balls, sticks of gum, a few red hots, or maybe a small chocolate bar. I would thank the person for their contribution to my growing stash of sugar-fix and be on my way to the next house. It was a wonderful evening filled with the big kids scaring the little ones, wishing you were old enough to ride around in the car with the teenagers, and then the final fun of dumping the sack of goodies on the dining room table and deciding where to start in the consumption of it all. I always loved Halloween.

When our kids came along, they loved Halloween too. We would spend weeks getting ready the costumes, cutting out pumpkins and cats from construction paper, and talking earnestly at the grocery store about what "treats" we would dispense that year. However, when the night itself came, there was no indiscriminate going from door to door for our kids, but there were guided visits to houses we knew were safe and welcoming. By then people had begun to find razor blades in the apples and poison in the candy. Times had changed. No more the carefree wandering throughout the community without a worry in the world.

Tonight the few kids who have come have looked much like the goblins of the past, but there are just so few of them. Of course, they may worry that there will be anthrax in the packages of candy. Or maybe they are just afraid to be out on a night like this because there have been increased threats of terrorism announced for this week. The scary has turned into fear. There is a difference.

But we are ready at our house for it to be like it has always been. Kay's Halloween village is all set up in the front hall and the sounds of squeaking barn doors, cats crying, thunder and lightning, and ghoulish screams are coming from the haunted barn and the Grimsley Manor house. The treats are in a bowl beside the front door and we are waiting for the bell to ring. We're ready. But the trick or treaters just aren't coming. What a disappointment. It would have signaled some sense of life being normal again if they



Bishop William W. Hutchinson

had just showed up in droves and we had wondered if the candy would hold out.

As the old hymn states it, "New occasions teach new duties, time makes ancient good uncouth." It is a new day. It is a different day.

Ancient good has become not only uncouth, but also unsafe. That which once was carefree and non-threatening has now become worrisome and very much a threat. Oh, how I wish it weren't so, but that's the bottom line.

But maybe it isn't all bad. Because we have had a sobering dose of a way of life much of the world has endured for decades, maybe we will become more understanding and compassionate for those in far away lands. Because we aren't able to move as care-freely as we once did, maybe we will know what it means to people who live under oppression and fear for their very lives. Because we don't feel free to wander indiscriminately from door to door believing our safety is secure and our health is not at risk, perhaps we will better identify with the refugees who wonder where they will find their next bite of food that is not tainted. Because we don't know the surety of our safety for today, much less tomorrow, maybe we will find more compassion for those who have no sense of security in their lives at any point. Maybe we will better identify with the people of the world this Halloween night than we ever have before. Just maybe.

If this whole unbelievably nightmarish scene has done any positive good for us, maybe it is that we will know the hearts and lives of our world neighbors a little better. That can be a very positive step. As we know one another better, and we know a better way of life to offer than that of fear, perhaps we will be better equipped and more motivated to do so. Never again do I just want to walk by the television and say, "Isn't it too bad people have to live that way." I want to say instead, "I'll help you get out of that way of life, because the miniscule taste of it I have had I don't like and I don't accept." No one should have to live this way.

How do we in the Christian family effectively make a difference for the global world in which we live? This is probably the most pressing question we followers of Jesus have to ask on this All Hallow's Eve!

In Christ's love,

Bill Hutchinson



Photo by Joshua Lewis

Rural Redemption

Members of "Sound Faith," the praise band from First United Methodist Church, Monroe, perform during the closing celebration for Rural Redemption, a day-long conference held Oct. 20 at First UMC, West Monroe. The event focused on heightening awareness of poverty in North Louisiana. The 145 participants heard keynote speaker Randy Ewing and participated in workshops on grant writing, resourcing, health issues and education. The conference gave churches and other community organizations motivation and practical advice needed to help those in poverty living around their churches and in their communities. The event was sponsored by the Children in Poverty Task Force and the Monroe District.

Preaching workshop slated for January

The Louisiana Conference Board of Ordained Ministry is sponsoring a conference-wide preaching workshop on Jan. 14-15, 2002.

Dr. John Holbert, professor of preaching at Perkins School of Theology, and Rev. Tyrone Gordon, senior pastor of St. Mark United Methodist Church in Wichita, Kansas, will conduct the workshop.

The presenters will focus on providing continuing education in the areas of sermon preparation and delivery, select-

ing sermon topics, and communication skills in connecting with the congregation. Cost of the event is covered by the board and will be held in the sanctuary of First UMC, Alexandria.

Registration can be made by calling First UMC at (318) 443-5696. If you plan to stay at the Conference Retreat Center, you must also call them at (318) 449-4500 to reserve a room. Further inquiries can be made through Rev. Flint Shea of the Board of Ordained Ministry at (985) 792-5255.

Minority scholarship available for 2002

United Methodist Communications is currently seeking candidates for the Judith L. Weidman Racial Ethnic Minority Fellowship. The fully-funded fellowship will be awarded for the 2002-2003 year to a United Methodist of racial ethnic minority background who is interested in pursuing communications as a career.

The fellowship provides an opportunity for one individual each year to work in a United Methodist office and to be mentored by an experienced and successful communicator.

UMCom pays the fellowship recipient \$30,000 for the year's salary, plus benefits, travel and moving expenses.

Barbara A. Nissen, director of the Conference Resourcing Team, said, "While we send this information to UM-related schools, most candidates say they learned about the fellowship from their pastor. This is how personal and important it is to get the information in their hands-or to be reminded about the material they received in the Leaders Mailing this summer."

Application deadline for the fellowship is March 15, 2002. For additional information contact the Conference Resourcing Team of United Methodist Communications, (888) 278-4862, e-mail rem@umcom.umd.org, or visit website <http://crt.umd.org/rem/>.

La. Methodist commissioned as deaconess

Elsie Cyrus of the Louisiana Conference was one of 21 individuals commissioned by the Board of Global Ministries as missionaries or deaconesses charged with taking the Gospel of the Lord into the world on behalf of The United Methodist Church. The service of

commissioning was held Oct. 24, in Stamford, Conn., during the board's semi-annual meeting.

Cyrus is has been assigned to the Community Service Outreach Ministry at Jordan United Methodist Church in Baton Rouge.



A UMNS photo

Clyde Scott, a U.S. Army chaplain from the Eastern Pennsylvania Annual Conference, visits with two sisters in Papracca, Bosnia. United Methodist chaplains in the military and other settings are "the Green Berets" of the denomination's Board of Higher Education and Ministry, but more are needed to serve.

Chaplains: 'on the front lines' of ministry

BY LINDA GREEN

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (UMNS) — United Methodist chaplains in the military and other settings are "the Green Berets" of the denomination's Board of Higher Education and Ministry, but more are needed to serve.

That is the Rev. Richmond Stoglin's assessment of the men and women who are providing religious leadership in the armed forces, medical and health facilities, and prisons. Stoglin is a prison chaplain at the Federal Medical Center in Fort Worth, Texas.

"We go where others dare not tread," Stoglin said. "Chaplains deal with life issues, death issues, potential combat and sometimes dangerous people. We are on the frontlines of accountability every day."

Those who choose to work in a correctional setting see their ministry as an "intentional spiritual referee," as they stand between the potential violence among inmate populations and the need to teach each prisoner the constructive power of hope, he said. "It is imperative for the United Methodist Church to embrace hope before we end up facing more ground zero-like situations."

Stoglin and fellow military chaplains and related ministry constituents met with the Section of Chaplains and Related Ministries during the Oct. 4-7 session of the United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

The Section on Chaplains and Related Ministries is the official endorsing agency of the United Methodist Church and approves ordained ministers to serve as chaplains and pastoral counselors. As of Oct. 1, the section had 1,200 endorsed or approved chaplains and pastoral counselors on its rolls.

"Chaplains and pastoral counselors are always in the places where people are broken or away," said the Rev.

Patricia Barrett, a staff executive in the section.

Chaplain officials from the armed services and pastoral counselors described their experiences in the aftermath of Sept. 11 and the impact the tragedy has had on their constituents. Chaplains are also with the soldiers as the crisis in Afghanistan escalates, the officials noted.

Since the attacks, pastoral counselors have been using their skills to help many people deal with grief, trauma and ongoing anxiety, said the Rev. Anne Ross Stewart, the section's pastoral counseling representative from Gaithersburg, Md. Since all citizens across the country were impacted in some way, "pastoral counselors are a part of the ministry team bringing healing and hope," she said.

Oct. 11 was National Depression Screening Day, and Stewart said many counselors donated time to give people free screenings.

As the director of InterFaith Counseling Services, she said many counselors also would provide a free screening for depression and or anxiety throughout the year "to educate and encourage the general public to seek help for these very common mental health problems."

"United Methodist clergy in ministry to the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard are serving quite literally around the world," said the Rev. Robert Phillips, command chaplain at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, Calif.

Fifty-three United Methodist naval chaplains wear the active-duty uniform, representing almost every annual conference, he said.

However, that number pales next to the 130 Southern Baptists. United Methodist Navy chaplains serve the Marines, Coast Guard as well as the Navy, he said.

Chaplains, from page 1

inmate must have a sentence no longer than four years, so they will be released soon. We involve them in a program of pre-release, to help prepare them," said Jones.

"These adolescents are not fully mature, and we work with them as they are maturing. Incarcerating young people with adults is what happens when the legal system insists on being tough on crime. Fortunately, by January, the youthful offenders will be totally isolated from the adult prison population," he added. By January there will be close to 200 such prisoners housed at Dixon.

Jones served the conference as a local pastor for 43 years before acquiring his current role as prison chaplain.

"Although I enjoyed those years so much, I often say I wish I had discovered this unique ministry years ago. The irony is that I drove past Dixon for years because I live extremely close to the prison."

Before serving at Dixon, Jones had to convince his wife Ann that his ministry would not put him at risk. "Actually, the environment in prison is quite different from the violent one portrayed in the movies. Prisoners are big huggers because they crave affection, and often didn't receive any while growing up. I really believe that the most dangerous part of my day is driving home in the afternoon," he said.

As a hospital chaplain, Duke provides many services other than working directly with patients and their families. "Every other month, the pastoral care staff provides in-services for hospital

staff concerning grief issues. We counsel people on securing advanced directives, more commonly known as 'living wills.' The staff conducts memorial services and special services for different occasions, such as the tragedy of September 11," she said.

Along with representatives from a variety of community agencies and resources, Duke will serve as a panel member for "Facing Loss: Goodbye is not Forever," a workshop to be held at Woman's Hospital from 7-9 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 13.

Like Jones, Duke sees her chaplain's role as a unique opportunity. "We are constantly entrusted with serving as witnesses to God's miracles, in birth and in death. It's awesome. I believe this opportunity opened me up to becoming a better minister because I look inwardly in a different way... I listen differently," she said.

Duke expressed that she is most commonly asked, "How can you continue to do this, day after day?" "I explain that the joy of being a part of God's miracles keeps me charged with the energy and enthusiasm to do the job. I recently came to work one morning, and prayed to God for an uplift to face the day. I was able to pick up a little 15-month-old patient who cuddled on my shoulder. I was instantly revived."

Those interested in attending the Nov. 13 workshop at Woman's Hospital on facing loss should contact 924-8444 to preregister. Admission to the event is free, but space is limited.



Photo by Joshua Lewis

Rev. James Jones serves as chaplain at Dixon Correctional Institute near Jackson.



Northwestern University Wesley Foundation unveils new sign

BY REV. ELLIS E. NEWMAN
CAMPUS MINISTER

It's up! Yes, our new sign is receiving a lot of attention and more importantly it is attracting new students. We are having over eighty students in our Wednesday night worship and between twenty-five to forty at almost every activity and outreach. God is doing a great work and we are excited!

Some have asked, "Why the change in the title billing? Why 'The Foundation' rather than 'The Wesley Westminster Foundation?'" Well, the most obvious is that it's shorter! When your title takes up more space on a page than what you're advertising, you know there is a problem. Secondly, was the grimace students would get on their face when you invited them to "The Wesley Westminster Foundation." The look was similar to one that a child would give after being asked, "Would you like to eat an artichoke?". However, when students are asked to join us at "The Foundation"

they may be curious but they don't have a look of disdain.

We are, however, proud of our heritage and name and that is why our board voted to highlight "The Foundation" a ministry of Wesley Westminster. Our incorporated name is still the same. All gifts and donations are still made to "The Wesley Westminster Foundation," as our ministry focus to students has only been heightened.

I can't say thanks enough to all the church members who have helped build this sign and more importantly our ministry.

We are rejoicing this year as we are seeing students being set free from addictions and destructive behaviors because we are helping them establish a spiritual, moral and educational "Foundation" for their lives.

If you would like to assist in this ministry please call the office at (318) 352-2888 or come by and meet some youth who will change your life forever!



Church member's artwork demonstrates 'The Way of the Cross'

BY ELOISE COX

In the year 2000, artist Hedy Butler visualized a project she felt she must do. In the late summer, she and husband Bob began collecting those materials she had envisioned to create the project.

First there were scraps of lumber cut at strange angles so when glued, nailed and screwed together, one could see the beginning of a crude cross jutting out of those odd-shaped pieces of wood all attached to a flat base. Bob and Hedy then set off to a local glass shop and were allowed to rummage through all the old pieces of discarded glass. Then came the raid on a shop vacuum cleaner that cleaned up broken pieces of the back glass of cars, and even dirt, lint screws, gum wrappers and the much-wanted black checkered ice cream salt size glass.

Taking all their treasures home, Hedy began the task of washing the vacuum savings with gallons of water flowing, picking each and every piece of glass, separating them from unwanted materials. Following this backbreaking endeavor, Hedy set out to find just the right size of gold wire, gold medallions, gold glitter and gold beading. Finally she began the task of putting the pieces together making sure each piece of glass was turned with the transparent part out and the black design down using tweezers to place them ever so carefully.

After all various materials formed the design, they were adhered totally in place. Then came the beginning of preparing the resin to hold and seal the glass and other materials in place. As a rule, resin is used for a one-surface finish, but with this piece came the challenge of multiple surface pieces. A removable form to hold the resin was constructed to cover the many different surfaces of the cross. It was now time to work on the jutting forms of those odd-shaped pieces of wood from the base. A large volume of the auto glass was adhered to the jutting forms and built up in layers, which gave a rough rock look,



then another window glass in green was shattered and added to the base. The resin was poured all over the jutting rock formations, giving the appearance of the

smooth cross having been carved from the rough glass at the base. A crown of thorns in gold and the three gold nails lay at the base of the cross.

Hedy states that this gave a satisfaction to her to be able to place her mind and heart into something visible. "The Way of the Cross" has received recognition at the Hamps Creek Art Guild Annual Show of 2000 for Most Unusual Technique and People's Choice Award; and in the Contemporary Artists' Guild Annual Show in February, 2001, the piece received Honorable Mention.

The piece of art was offered to Nolley Memorial UMC, and with Bob's carpentry talents and Hedy's marbling technique. "The Way of the Cross" is now situated on a beautiful stand in the foyer of the church.

By personal admission, Hedy is a "free spirit" and loves doing two and three-dimensional works. She works with paper mache, collage, fabric, watercolor oils, pen and ink, rocks, clay and anything that comes to her mind. She says she enjoys people, boots, pink roses and travel, and is not into painting barns and magnolias. Hedy plans to start welding soon using the set she received for Christmas.

"Some persons can sing, some can teach, some can cook; with me, I can plan and I can share. God has been good to me. "The Way of the Cross" is but one small way I have been able to give something back", stated Hedy on presenting the piece to Nolley.

It is impossible to do justice with words and picture to the literally beautiful visual appeal of this piece of art. Many hours, days and months went into its completion, and the congregation of Nolley UMC will be able to enjoy it for many years to come.

Send your church's stories to the
Alexandria District
Communication Advisor:

Miriam Brown
3200 Messina Rd.
Boyce, LA 71409
(318) 445-9035

LOUISIANA

Now!

Conference Youth Fall Supplement

<http://www.la-umc.org/youth.htm>



2002 PEACE WITH JUSTICE



Contest for Senior High Youth and/or Youth Groups

Topic:

A Christian Response to Terrorism

Rules and Guidelines 2002

The contestants will benefit from their participation by learning more about the Peace With Justice Program, and their experience will be useful to include on resumes and college applications.

Requirements: a) The individual contestants must be members of The United Methodist Church and in grades 9-12 during the 2001 – 2002 school year.

b) United Methodist Youth groups of United Methodist churches or clusters of United Methodist Youth groups.

Awards: Two modes of expression: Multi-Media and Essay.

a) A multi-media contest utilizing power point or video with sound not more than 5 minutes in length submitted on a 3 ½" disk or CD or VHS Tape. *Individual and group multi-media entries will be judged together.*

For entries submitted by a United Methodist youth group the prizes are:

\$500 1st place, \$300 2nd place, \$100 3rd place

For entries submitted by an individual the prizes are:

\$300 1st place, \$200 2nd place, \$100 3rd place

b) An essay contest of 500-600 words double spaced with the page number in the upper right hand corner that includes a title page with essay title and author's name and address.

Prizes for individual entries are: \$300 1st place, \$200 2nd place, \$100 3rd place

Deadline: Entries should be submitted by March 15, 2002, to

Rev. Phil Woodland
University United Methodist Church
3350 Dalrymple Drive
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Questions may be addressed to Rev. Woodland at the above address or phone (225) 336 9801, fax (225) 344 0530 or email: jpwood929@aol.com.

Judges: Members selected from the Conference Board of Church and Society.

Judging: The entry, multi-media or essay, will be judged on content and interpretation of A Christian Response to Terrorism.

A Biblical foundation for Peace With Justice and guidance from The United Methodist Social Principles and Book of Resolutions should be integrated into the entry.



Mark Your Calendar



Youth and Youth Workers Calendar of Events

Louisiana Conference Web Page: <http://www.la-umc.org/youth.htm>

2002

Perkins School of Youth Ministry - (Adult workers with youth) - Dallas, Texas
January 7-11
Happening (10th-12th grades & adults) – Conference Center
January 11-13
CCYM Meeting
January 18-19
Connection 2002: UM National Conference for Youth Workers (Formerly FORUM) (Every other year)
January 23-27 Panama City, Florida
Sr. High Retreat (9th-12th grades & adults) – Conference Center
February 22-24 #1
March 1-3 #2
Discerning the Call – Conference Center
February 15-16
VIM Takin' It To the Streets
March
Camping Sunday
March 24
Centenary Youth Leadership Conference – Centenary College
April 12-14
Confirmation Day with Bishop William Hutchinson – Conference Center
April 13
Reaching and Keeping Senior High Seminar – Conference Center
April 27
General Conference (Every four years)
May 5
YSF Sunday
May 5
Annual Conference
June 2-5
DCYM Training (District Teams) – Conference Center
June 7-8
VIM Youth – OIMC : June
Christian Alliance: June 22-30
Church of the Savior: June 21-30
UM Army June, July
JYMO (CCYM members) – Mt. Sequoyah, Fayetteville, Arkansas
July 8-12
South Central Jurisdictional Conference (Every four years)
Happening (10th-12th grades & adults) – Conference Center
July 19-21
Youth '03 – University of Tennessee Campus, Knoxville, Tennessee
Weekend of the Cross, Trinity UMC, Ruston
July 25-28
UMYO (Formerly NYMO) (CCYM youth & adult representative) (Every other year)
ICYCE (International Youth 18-30 year olds) (Every four years)
August, 2002
CCYM Meeting
August 17
Adult Youth Workers Conference Center
August 23-24
Fall Convocation (Youth & Adults)
September 21
JR. High Retreat (7th & 8th grades & adults) – Conference Center
October 25-27 #1
November 1-3 #2
W. T. Handy Convocation
November 8-9
New York Seminar (10th grade – Sophomore College & Adults) Every other year
November 23-30

2003

January 13-17
January 17-19
January 24-25
February 7-9 #1
February 14-16 #2
May 4
June
June 6-7
June
June, July
July 7-11
July 18-20
July 23-27
August
August 16
August 22-23
September 27
October 31-November 2 #1
November 7-9 #2
November 7-8

2004

January 12-16
January 16-18
January 23-24
January
February 6-8 #1
February 13-15 #2
May
May 2
June
June 4-5
June
June, July
July 5-9
July
July 23-25
August 21
August 27-28
August 25
October 29-31 #1
November 12-14 #2
November 5-6
November 20-27

Now! Not Later

Conference Youth Fundraiser

Dear Youth Director,

Here is a great opportunity for Conference youth groups to raise funds for projects and trips while spreading the "good news" of The United Methodist Church.

Louisiana Now!, the official newspaper of the Louisiana Annual Conference, offers the latest news, opportunities and witness in our church today. This colorful, informative publication tells the story of Louisiana United Methodists and connects them in spirit and ministry.

Youth groups are invited to sell one- and two-year subscriptions to *Louisiana Now!* as part of a unique fundraiser designed to produce big funds for your youth group's activities! For every one-year \$15 subscription sold, your youth group will earn \$3. Every two-year \$25 subscription earns \$5 for your youth group.

Delivery of subscriptions will begin within two to three weeks after I receive your paperwork.

We hope that this fundraiser will become an integral part of youth group fundraising activities year after year. Not only does it generate valuable earnings for your youth groups, but you are helping to expand the readership of this newspaper created by United Methodists for United Methodists.

Church members will want to buy *Louisiana Now!* for themselves, but remember that subscriptions to this unique publication make perfect gifts for friends and family.

Good luck and blessings in your efforts!

Betty

Betty Backstrom
Editor



Say 'No!' to car washes, 'No!' to bakesales! With the new *Louisiana Now!* Conference Youth Fundraiser, you can raise significant dollars for your youth group's activities – just by introducing more people to the Good News of United Methodism in the Louisiana Conference. Every one-year subscription your youth group sells nets \$3. Every two-year subscription earns \$5. Just 50 two-year subscriptions will generate \$250 in funds!

Remember to write clearly and double-check all address and contact information on the subscription order form (see reverse.) The form is made to be copied easily on 8.5x11 paper and may also be downloaded from the Conference website at: <http://www.la-umc.org>. Telephone numbers of new subscribers will be used only for resolving postal delivery problems. If you have any questions or further needs, contact Betty Backstrom at (888) 239-5286 or (225) 346-1646, ext. 227.

Follow these 10 easy steps to success:

1. Talk to your pastor and lay leaders about the campaign. Ask for their support in promoting your fundraising efforts.
2. Set the dates for your subscription campaign, allowing 4-6 weeks as a recommended length. Make sure your dates are approved and confirmed by your church.
3. Photocopy and distribute subscription order forms to the youth.
4. Encourage youth to sell individually and set up sign-up tables in an approved, visible location.
5. Ask people to purchase one or more subscriptions to *Louisiana Now!* They make great gifts. Each one-year subscription costs \$15; every two-year subscription costs \$25.
6. Ask your pastor to make a brief announcement about the campaign from the pulpit each Sunday during the sale, or enlist key leaders to "talk it up."
7. Promote the campaign by submitting information to your church newsletter and/or Sunday bulletin.
8. Make copies of the paper available for people to read so they can see what they have been missing. Contact the Communications Department at the Conference Office in Baton Rouge if you do not have extra copies of *Louisiana Now!* on hand. (225-346-1646 or 1-888-239-5286, ext. #227)
9. Remember: Subscriptions do not automatically renew. This time next year is the perfect opportunity to re-sell subscriptions, giving you another opportunity to raise funds for your youth program. It costs \$15 to subscribe – that's only 62 cents per issue! An even better bargain for a \$25 two-year subscription – only 52 cents per issue! What a value!
10. At the end of the campaign, collect all subscription order forms from the youth, and send originals along with one check made out to *Louisiana Now!*, 527 North Blvd., Baton Rouge, La. 70802. Remember to deduct your share of the proceeds before sending the check. Keep \$3 for every one-year subscription sold; keep \$5 for every two-year subscription sold.

Now! **Not Later**

Youth Group Fundraiser Subscription Form

Now! Not Later
Conference Youth Fundraiser
New Subscriber List

Church _____ District _____
Youth Leader _____ Youth Seller _____

Subscriptions: One-Year \$15 or Two-Years \$25

Please PRINT clearly to ensure prompt postal delivery.

[illegible]

UMCOR continues Methodist response to Sept. 11 attacks

NEW YORK (UMNS) — As the second-month “anniversary” of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks approaches, the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) is continuing its efforts to respond to the crisis on local, national and international levels.

On Oct. 31, for example, 17 volunteers were engaged in activities around Manhattan, according to Don Falvey, an UMCOR volunteer from Utah. At the Church of St. Paul and St. Andrew, United Methodist, on the Upper West Side, volunteers were helping out at the long-established food pantry and offering counseling in English and Spanish. Volunteers from the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference also were providing child care at the church.

Downtown at Metropolitan-Duane United Methodist Church, counseling was available, with the sanctuary open for prayer and meditation. John Street Church, a few blocks from the World Trade Center site, provided a “listening post” as well as a staging area for volunteers to reach out to rescue workers.

Falvey said that UMCOR volunteers do not go into “ground zero” except with special permission. He explained that they have found it more productive to be available at the perimeter as rescue workers stop for a break, take a meal or leave their shift.

He has spent a good deal of time in New York recently, arriving on Sept. 19 for a four-week tour of duty and then returning again soon afterward. “It’s been sort of a continual change,” Falvey said. The “extremely subdued” atmosphere of the city soon after the attacks had slowly transformed back to the more normal day-to-day doings, he noted.

“Some of the police are even starting to smile a bit,” he added.

Besides Falvey, volunteers who have spent considerable time coordinating UMCOR activities in New York include his wife, Carol, Brian Lewis and Jonna Marie of Colorado, Bob Huie of Arkansas, Frank Ridgeforth of Virginia, Bob Chamberlain of Washington, Lee Bines of South Carolina and Jody Burgum. Nina Martin, UMCOR field staff from North Dakota, also has been



A UMNS photo by John C. Goodwin

IN SUPPORT — A banner expressing the support of United Methodists from Baton Rouge, La., hangs outside John Street United Methodist Church in New York, a few blocks from what was once the World Trade Center. The United Methodist Committee on Relief has established a “listening post” at the church where victims of the tragedy are encouraged to come in to talk.

involved.

The Rev. F. Thomas Hazelwood, UMCOR’s national disaster coordinator, said that even though the number of people taking advantage of “listening posts” at the city’s United Methodist churches has diminished lately, the concept was likely to continue in some form.

“I firmly believe that in the next two weeks, as we move closer to Thanksgiving, the need is going to escalate again,” he explained. “We’re going to try to continue to find ways to reach people to give them the opportunity to talk.”

One volunteer, Camille Yorkey, a pastoral counselor from North Carolina, has

chronicled her experiences in New York at www.hopeinthewilderness.org online.

UMCOR also is cooperating with Tepeyac, a local Hispanic organization that is assisting the families from five Central American countries whose loved ones were in the midst of U.S. immigration proceedings and were killed in the terrorist attacks.

In many cases, these individuals had been sending money regularly to family in their home country and had not been heard from since Sept. 11.

In terms of pastoral care, Hazelwood is hoping to devise some long-term strategies to help pastors and congrega-

tions in the New York area cope with the aftermath of Sept. 11. One possibility is gathering two or three congregations together to provide support for each other in dealing with fears and safety issues. UMCOR found that after the Oklahoma City bombing “these group sessions were very helpful,” he said.

Donations can be designated to UMCOR Advance No. 901125-3, “Love in the Midst of Tragedy.” Checks can be placed in church collection plates or mailed to UMCOR at 475 Riverside Dr., Room 330, New York, NY 10115. Credit-card donations can be made by calling (800) 554-8583.

MacDonell seeks photos

MacDonell United Methodist Children’s Services in Houma, La. is looking for pictures of former administrators. Photographs are needed by the facility for Ada Dail (1949), Anne Coucoules (1954) and Maude Bristol (1957), all past administrators.

Thirty-six school age children are provided complete residential treatment at MacDonell, which has evolved into a therapeutic residential facility.

A brick campaign is currently underway to benefit the children’s home. Personalized bricks will be a permanent addition to the “Memory Walk” in McCoy Garden, on MacDonnell’s campus. For more information, contact Douglas Hall at (985) 868-8362.

Music video available

In response to needs expressed by local United Methodist churches after the terrorist attack of Sept. 11., UMCOR along with UMCOR has issued a music video entitled “O God, Our Words Cannot Express.” Created by Church World Service, the video provides gripping images of lives changed forever by the tragic events. The tape is 2:05 minutes long and designed for use as a minute-for-minute during worship services and with small groups in the congregation. UMCOR is providing two copies of the video to each conference resource center director. Copies of the tape can be made for individual churches. Permission is granted by the producer to duplicate and distribute copies of “O God, Our Words Cannot Express.”



By the book

Evan Hunsberger, 15, of Orange, Calif., is working to preserve the legacy of a book of daily devotional readings provided for soldiers going off to war. Sixty years ago, the United Methodist Publishing House offered the book, “Strength for Service to God and Country,” to soldiers during World War II, including Hunsberger’s grandfather, Eugene Hunsberger. The elder Hunsberger, a chaplain, carried the devotional everywhere, and it was his constant companion until his death a few years ago.

A UMNS photo

Methodist church uses "micro credit" to transform lives

BY LYNDA C. WARD

SOUTH BEND, Ind. (UMNS) — Most United Methodists have never heard the term "micro credit," but at Broadway Christian Parish United Methodist Church, it is not only a familiar concept but also a ministry that is transforming people's lives.

Micro credit, pioneered by Bangladeshi economics professor Muhammad Yunus, is the practice of giving small, collateral-free loans to people who would not be able to secure financing from a traditional bank. But micro credit is more than a transac-

tion, proponents say. It is a partnership between lender and borrower enacted not only to improve the financial situation of the borrower, but to transform his or her life.

Last spring, Broadway's minister, the Rev. Michael Mather, traveled to the small, impoverished Muslim country of Bangladesh to study Yunus' Grameen Bank. Mather wanted to see how he

could adapt the concept of micro credit to meet the needs of his parishioners and the surrounding neighborhood on the south side of South Bend. As a result, the pastor helped Broadway establish its own version of micro credit.

"So far we've given 10 loans, but we don't charge the high interest," says Mather, referring to the 20 percent interest that Yunus' bank charges. "We charge only 1 percent and put that money back into our program to help keep it going."

To date, Broadway's loans have supported, among others, the opening of Le'Loupes Jewelry; Dean's Accounting and Bookkeeping Service, which received both a loan and additional office space inside the church; a sewing service started by a group of women in the church; and Beanie World and a bicycle repair shop, both run by youth.

"The loan has given me the tools I need to get going," says Dean Hunt, of Dean's Accounting and Bookkeeping Service. "Broadway has also helped sup-

port my business with a donation of a computer, desk, and filing cabinet, [these were] gifts from the people at Broadway and other churches."

Broadway has given out \$1,500 in loans since late spring or early summer. The largest loan was for \$500 and was paid back in full with the 1 percent interest a matter of weeks, according to the church. The smallest loan was \$50. The average amount of a loan is between \$200 and \$300.

The loans vary in duration. Three were six-month loans, one was for a week, and the others have been for between one and four months. In all cases, the loans have been paid back to Broadway "in time" or before the time due.

The church also supports its borrowers in other ways. Broadway Market is open at the church one Saturday each month for the public to peruse the new businesses, and a Web site, www.broadwaytownsquare.com, gives those ven-

tures a presence on the Internet.

Micro credit has its critics, especially those who say that it is more "loan sharking" than ministry. But Mather reminds people that Methodism's founder, John Wesley, encouraged Christian groups to offer similar loans.

"Micro credit is ministry because it is investing in the gifts of people who the world sees as poor, needy and empty, but who we know are the gifted and beloved children of God," Mather said.

For Yunus, the ministry fulfills one of the pillars of the Islamic religion: the pillar of charity. That emphasis on charity is something that Islam has in common with Christianity.

Micro credit has been ministry to Broadway as well, for the parishioners are quick to tell how their service to others has increased their faith and offered them deeper insights into what it means to live in community.

For more information on micro credit, visit www.CrossandFlame.org.

Global Ministries faces big cuts

STAMFORD, Conn. (UMNS) — Budget cutting and the re-designation of funds were a major focus when the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries met Oct. 22-25.

The deliberations followed actions already taken by the board's staff cabinet in early October to curb spending, including through staff reductions. In total, 98 staff positions were cut, but only about half that number represented people actually let go.

Cuts in staff and programs have not been made arbitrarily, according to the Rev. Randolph Nugent, the board's chief executive. "In order to pay all bills in 2001 and recommend a balanced budget for 2002, there needed to be a reduction in the amount of \$11 million," he said in his address to directors.

"Our investment portfolio lost \$21.3 million in value over a two-year period," he continued. "The cabinet needed to find \$11 million in cuts over both years, and in the end you will see that the 2002 budget is \$8.6 million lower than the 2001 budget."

General funds that the board receives from the church as a whole also have come in lower than projected. That was a factor as well when directors approved a total budget of \$96.6 million for 2002, compared to an original budget of \$105.1 million for the previous year.

Directors approved the re-designation of some net assets, with \$3 million allotted to support the 2001 operations and more than \$8 million to be used for the 2002 operating budget.

Joyce Sohl, chief executive of the Women's Division and the board's acting treasurer, reminded directors that this is not the first time in the board's history that cuts in program, staff and operating expenses have been needed.

Some of the current financial difficulties have their origin in problems that occurred over a number of years, she added. One example was the cost of missionary support in the former World Division. "It was eating up available funds, and many a budget had to be

readjusted to care for over-expenditures," she explained. "This problem continues with increased number of personnel, increasing costs of health care and increased costs of providing funds for place of assignment needs. This is the major reason for expenditure readjustments in 2001 and into the future."

Earlier in October, board officials cited higher-than-anticipated expenses in the agency's popular "10-10-10" mission program as part of the current budget problem, due to substantial insurance costs and less financial support than expected from annual conferences. Actions to curb those expenses, in terms of limiting salary and insurance benefits, were adopted at this meeting.

A declining stock market also has had a major impact on the Board of Global Ministries, which had become used to higher returns. "Combine this with the fact that recent changes in accounting rules require us now to book unrealized capital gains and losses, (and) we see the balance sheet of the board having peaks and valleys that we would not have experienced previously," Sohl said.

During 1996-99, as the stock market was booming, the mission agency designated its capital gains for new and expanded mission programs to be implemented over five to 10 years. Those programs included new missionary categories, such as the W.T. Handy Young Adult Missionaries, renovation of health care facilities around the world and a land-mine removal project. Some of those funds have been re-designated to help balance the budget in 2001 and 2002.

"In the midst of all the changing financial realities, the Women's Division and United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) are holding steady," Sohl told the directors. "Income from United Methodist Women appears to be keeping pace with last year. The One Great Hour of Sharing offering (which covers UMCOR's administrative costs), as of the end of September, is up 5.2 percent over last year."

La. Conference likely to feel impact of broad GBGM cuts

In light of recent budget cuts, the General Board of Global Ministries has requested that each annual conference prioritize all grant requests that are submitted to them.

"We now know that there will simply not be as much money available for church construction and renovation," said Rev. Alonzo Campbell, director of Special Ministries for the Conference.

In order to facilitate prioritization of applications, stepped up deadlines for

spring and fall grants have been established. The next round of grants is due by Jan. 10, 2002.

Applications will be reviewed by the Cabinet and prioritized by the Conference Board of Global Ministries, then submitted to GBGM by their deadline of March 1. The next round is due by July 1, 2002. As before, all applications should be submitted to Rev. Alonzo Campbell, Special Ministries, P. O. Box 193, Denham Springs, LA 70727.

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E-mail: umdf@gbgm-umc.org

General Board of Global Ministries • The United Methodist Church



Youth paints church's Sunday School area to resemble Upper Rooms



A UMNS photo

Spence Townsend, 18, spent two months this summer painting murals on the stairwell and in the courtyard at Parkway Heights United Methodist Church in Hattiesburg, Miss., as part of an effort to transform the Sunday school area into the Upper Rooms.

BY DEBBIE BERNARDO

HATTIESBURG, Miss. (UMNS) —

The task of transforming the Parkway Heights United Methodist Church Sunday school area into the Upper Rooms required scores of volunteers, who did everything from sweeping floors and organizing closets to painting rooms and shopping for carpet to installing water lines and rewiring the computer room.

One of the most dedicated volunteers was 18-year-old Spence Townsend of Hattiesburg, who spent two months this summer painting murals on the stairwell and in the Courtyard. The project was daunting because of its scope alone, Townsend says, but for him, the sky literally was the limit.

"Painting the sky on the ceilings was a big obstacle because it was a physical strain as well as a danger," he recounts. "I had to use scaffolding for the first time ever when I painted the ceiling above the stairwell. I got pretty discouraged and, yes, there were times I felt like giving up, but I just put faith in myself and in my ability to get the job done."

The Parkway Heights murals are the largest project Townsend has ever tackled. "I felt honored that the church put so much trust in me, but I was very worried by such a great responsibility," says the freshman art major at the University of Southern Mississippi.

A graduate of Hattiesburg High School, he has received numerous awards for his work; two of his efforts — a representation of one of his art teachers and a series of six large panels that form a mural dedicated to the fine arts — still hang in the art wing at the school.

For the Upper Rooms, Townsend looked for design ideas in books about Jerusalem and the Holy Land, making quick sketches that allowed him to visualize what he would paint.

"I viewed the pictures in these books to get a feel for the landscape, and then created my own interpretations on how the murals should be painted. It was challenging to develop designs on such a large scale. I really had to think about

how the different walls would eventually work together when painted. I improvised minor details and touched up as I went along."

As Townsend worked, a steady stream of volunteers pitched in to complete a myriad of chores associated with the renovation. Art teacher Kim Ryland spent many hours painting the upstairs corridors and each of the workshop doors.

Jim Stone essentially served as "church engineer," constructing risers and the arch for the entrance, wiring rooms, installing sinks and countertops, even installing water and sewer lines.

"Since the future of our faith depends on the education and growth of our children, I gladly accepted the challenge of helping to renovate and equip the old rooms," Stone says. The biggest jobs, he adds, were installing water and sewer service to the art room and putting in a new water cooler.

One of Stone's most visible contributions is the arch that graces the entrance to the Upper Rooms. He began with a scale drawing on graph paper, then transferred the design full scale to a sheet of thick plywood, using a saber saw to cut the two sides of the arch. He used thinner material to create the top and bottom, then assembled the arch and put it in place for Townsend to paint.

There are many rewarding aspects of the project, Stone says, among them "the willing help of so many people and the single-minded dedication of Spence Townsend to the murals."

Townsend says he's only received positive feedback so far, but he's not sure yet whether he's completely satisfied with the murals.

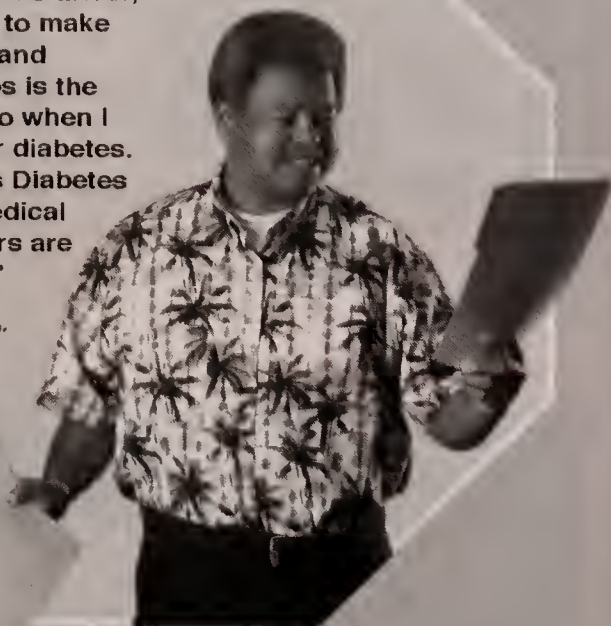
"I'm trying not to look at them for a while, because I can usually see my mistakes pretty easily if I can look at my artwork with a fresh eye. It would be great if my college art professors saw the work, because they could offer plenty of constructive criticism. I am proudest of the continuity I believe the painting presents as a whole."

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Nelson Washington, Jr.
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You can find the Louisiana Annual Conference on the Internet at
<http://www.la-umc.org>



Fore charity

Trinity United Methodist Church, Ruston, took first place in the first annual Bishop's Sprint PCS Conference Center Golf Tournament, held Oct. 8 at the Alexandria Golf and Country Club.

Fifty-two golfers participated in the competition, raising more than \$12,000 to fund the growth of the Conference Center in Woodworth.

Members of the winning team included Rolly Walker, Rev. Fred Wideman, Trot Hunst and Brian Mercer, pictured above with their combination lamp-trophies. Corporate sponsor Sprint PCS played a generous role in the success of the event, which attracted 13 teams of avid golfers and "duffers" alike.

Bishop William Hutchinson, a self-proclaimed "non-golfer," putted with every team on the eighteenth hole.



A UMNS photo by John C. Goodwin

Makeshift Memorial

Passersby have created a memorial to victims of the Sept. 11 World Trade Center attack along this chain-link fence outside "ground zero" in New York. The United Methodist Committee on Relief has established a "listening post" at nearby John Street United Methodist Church, where victims of the tragedy are encouraged to come in to talk.

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NEWS,
OPPORTUNITIES AND
WITNESS OF LOUISIANA
CONFERENCE MINISTRIES

VOL. 2, NO. 22

BATON ROUGE, LA

November 23, 2001

New "prayer" TV spots to air in November

New prime time United Methodist Church television commercials are appearing on CNN during November.

The TV spots speak of the denomination's belief in the value of global prayer in the midst of growing fears of bioterrorism and war.

These will run in addition to the Advent series of spots planned for the

weeks leading up to Christmas as a continuation of Igniting Ministry. Multiple showings of the "prayer" spot are being shown each evening.

Local church advertising resources are now online for download. These materials (except the TV spot) can be put into local media outlets or simply used in your local church. The original e-

mail and all the downloadable materials can be found at: <http://www.igniting-ministry.org/tragedy>. As an option, instead of downloading the materials, you can order them through the Igniting Ministry Product Store at www.igniting-ministry.org or by calling our Product

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□ Baton Rouge
District /4



The United Methodist Mission Center in Baton Rouge is providing turkeys and other holiday fixings like pumpkin pies through Christmas. Recipient and Mission Center helper Sarah Williams, center, displays her Thanksgiving turkey with volunteers Gene Stout, Inez Townsend and Aline Baird, all members of Ingleside United Methodist Church.

Mission Center offers sustenance for body and spirit

BY LYN SHEEHAN

Join in a "Turkey Hunt" and help the United Methodist Mission Center continue to minister during the holiday season.

"Do you have one turkey too many in your freezer? We will be glad to take

it off your hands and place it with a needy family so that they, too, might have a special holiday," explains Genny Mandujano, executive director of the Mission Center.

Many grocery stores offer special buys on turkeys that can be donated

through the Baton Rouge center. This year's Turkey Hunt began in November and will continue through the Christmas season.

"Christmas at the United Methodist

See Mission Center, page 5

UMCOR head addresses Sept. 11 response at Sager-Brown

BY BETTY BACKSTROM
EDITOR

On the morning of Sept. 11, Paul Dirdak, deputy general secretary of the United Methodist Committee on Relief, was in San Francisco attending a centennial celebration of the life's work of Ancil Adams. Like most Americans, he was quickly torn from the day's plans to face the harsh realities of the greatest

terrorist event ever to happen on our country's soil.

Earlier this month, Dirdak traveled to the Sager-Brown UMCOR Depot in Baldwin, La. and addressed a group of volunteers and depot employees on UMCOR's multi-level response to the national tragedy.

Dirdak, a resident of New York City, also spoke to what daily life is like now

for New Yorkers. "People who don't know one another feel a kinship. We are going through a joint experience. New Yorkers know why there is an acrid odor in the air and that the thin layer of white dust on everything is precious stuff. That it is literally the citizens that were lost in the crashes and explosions." Also lost are

See UMCOR, page 6

ON THE JOURNEY

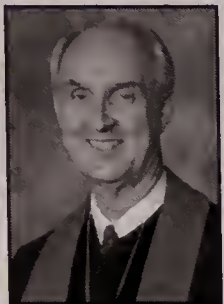
Garbage Trucks and the Second Coming

I heard them rumbling through my neighborhood at about 5:00 AM. It was the unmistakable sound of trash-cans being emptied and the truck compacting the contents so that more could be put in. The noise brought me out of a deep sleep and I thought, "It isn't the right time for the garbage trucks." But they were working nonetheless. Suddenly, for some odd reason the Advent scripture concerning the second coming of Jesus popped into my head as I listened to this sleep-disturbing grind. "Watch therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the householder had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have watched and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready; for the Son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect." (Matthew 24: 42-44)

It seems strange to have noisy garbage trucks remind you of the Second Coming! But then that is the nature of the event itself. Surprise! It can come any time. It can come any place. It can come to any person. It can come to any group of people. Jesus can come again in one cosmic ending when all of time is wrapped in a ball and brought to completion. Or Jesus can come again in the second birth of every individual who accepts him into her/his heart and allows him to live in her/his spirit. Yes, Jesus can surprisingly come again and again. And, I believe, he will come one final time when all of history is gathered together in his total triumph.

We are about to enter the Advent season when we focus our scripture reading, our worship services, and our hopes on the coming of Jesus. In many respects that focus will be on preparing our hearts to receive the joyous Christmas message that Christ is born! But the more pressing message of Advent is that we need to be prepared to meet the Christ in the middle of the night or in the middle of our sinful life and we need to be prepared to have serious conversation with him at that point. That's a much more disturbing Advent message than "It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas."

Many discussions and decisions over the past few weeks have been centered on this serious meeting with Jesus himself. The Council of Bishops wrestled with that encounter when they drafted their pastoral letter that



Bishop William W. Hutchinson

"The more pressing message of Advent is that we need to be prepared to meet the Christ in the middle of the night or in the middle of our sinful life."

that is represented in the letter. Many hours were spent in dialogue and prayer as this epistle was readied for the church. It is the genuine, though not perfect, product of an encounter with the spirit of Jesus.

Our national and international leaders have done their own searching in their faith-filled selves as they have sought for the just way to respond to recent acts of terrorism. I have no doubt but what they met the risen Christ in their sleepless hours and discerning searches for the right answers and the right response. A person of Christian faith cannot make decisions any other way.

As we are reminded of the new birth of Jesus in our lives and as we prepare our spirits for the coming of the Christ child, may we not go glibly into that good night! Instead, may we genuinely be watchful for the coming of the Lord and may we have ready ears to hear his coming – whether in the garbage trucks in the early morning hours, or in the words of a friend or an enemy, or in the events of the world, or in the statements from other persons of faith that make our blood boil – may we hear his coming, for "in this world of sin, where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in." (Phillips Brooks, "O Little Town of Bethlehem")

It is indeed a journey to walk with the Christ isn't it! May this Advent be the most blessed of all your journeys thus far.

In Christ's love,

Bill Hutchinson

you can find printed in its entirety on page six of this edition of *Louisiana Now!* That wrestling led them finally to the composite statement you read. I can assure you, this was no casual decision-making process. Nor would every individual Bishop agree that she/he is in total agreement that the statement says all that needs to be said. Unfortunately, the secular press has twisted the agonizing search for words and the challenging search for a faithful statement

W.T. Handy Convocation



'Looking to the future'

Ruth Handy, top, speaks at a luncheon held in her honor at First Street United Methodist Church as part of the W. T. Handy Convocation in New Orleans, Nov. 9-10. District Superintendents Freddie Henderson (New Orleans), and Dr. Doug Ezell (Lake Charles), visit in Stern Hall on Dillard University's campus with Rev. James Graham, pastor for the Asbury-Emmanuel charge in Natchitoches, and Rev. James Haynes of Cornerstone UMC in New Orleans during the conference. Bishop Alfred L. Norris served as keynote speaker for the event attended by approximately 100 clergy and lay persons throughout the Conference. Norris spoke about "forgetting the past and looking to the future." Workshops covered a number of topics, including strengthening the black church, nurturing pastors, and clergy taxes and pensions. Participants viewed a newly produced videotape about the life of Bishop W. T. Handy. The video, entitled "Handy Kaleidoscope," was produced by United Methodist Publishing House.

Igniting Ministry, from page 1

Store toll-free at (877) 281-6535. When you choose this option, you receive a VHS tape of the TV spot, two radio CD's (one for the radio ads and one for the PSA), a CD for the newspaper ads in several sizes and options, PSA placement

guidelines, and black and white advertising "slicks" for those who prefer printed ads.

UMCOM is charging only for duplication, shipping and handling for these materials.

SAM Grant applications due in December

Each year the Board of Global Ministries awards Support Action Ministry (SAM) Grants to assist local churches in the establishment of new mission projects.

Traditionally, priority has been given to those projects serving the needs of children and youth at risk. A SAM grant may be awarded up to \$3,000 annually

for three consecutive years. Churches wishing to apply may call or write the SAM Committee Chair, Rev. Carol Winn, for an application. The address is: Jefferson United Methodist Church, 10328 Jefferson Hwy., Baton Rouge, LA 70809; or call (225) 293-4440. Strict deadline for all new applications and re-applications is Dec. 31.

Centenary College Choir performs at former school site in Jackson

BY LYN SHEEHAN

The world renowned Centenary Choir visited their roots in Jackson on Friday, Oct. 19.

The 65-voice choir gave a special open-air performance at Centenary State Commemorative Site to an audience of 256 people. Their free concert was sponsored by the Friends of Old Centenary College Board.

Kenneth Schwab, president of Centenary College of Louisiana, and Vice President Gene Gregory traveled from Shreveport to attend the event.

They were joined by Centenary alumni, college staff, members of the community, and prospective students and their families.

Framed by the columns of Old Centenary's dormitory building, the choristers charmed their audience with their vocal ability and projection. Their expansive repertoire included spirituals, the Cajun "Jambalaya," a lively song sung in Spanish, Broadway hits, and American folksongs. Accompaniment was provided by individual choir members on the piano, violin, flute, harmonica, bass and varied percussion instruments.

Choir members were the overnight guests of Feliciana residents from Ethel, Jackson, Clinton and St. Francisville. Their talent and manner greatly impressed the host families.

"We have never done anything like this before," said Rhonda Tomb, a member of Jackson United Methodist Church. The Tomb family hosted four of the young people.

"It was a great experience for our family," she added.

As part of the United Methodist family, Jackson UMC provided their facilities for the choir to change into tuxedos and gowns. After the concert, hosts gathered at the church to meet their guests and take them home.

"We had four adorable boys," reported Caroline Joseph of Ethel UMC. "They sang for their supper. I never would have believed the music they got out of my piano."

The choir had nothing but praise for their hosts and the hosts had only good things to say of the choir.

"Many people want to make this a yearly event," said Phoebe Thompson, a member of the Friends of Old Centenary College Board. "It was a great success."



The Centenary College Choir returned recently to the school's historic home in Jackson.

Academy for Spiritual Leadership training deadline falls in December

"So, what does the spiritual director teach? In the simplest and also most profound terms, the spiritual director is simultaneously a learner and a teacher of discernment. What is happening? Where is God in this person's life? What is the story? Where does this person's story fit in our common Christian story?"

This quote by Margaret Guenther gives insight into the ministry and function of the person who serves as a spiritual director. It is a way of listening that does not need to fix the other person's problems or issues. It is a way of asking questions that draw out the inner wisdom that is there within the person who

is speaking. The spiritual director guides a person deeper and more clearly through their faith journey to lead them closer and closer to God.

The Academy for Spiritual Leadership is offering a two-year training course for twenty persons who would like to engage in a process that will involve first experiencing spiritual direction, then learning the skills and sensitivities of spiritual direction. The second year provides a chance to offer spiritual direction to others and receive feedback and supervision in a safe environment.

The two year course will include a total of six retreats which will be held at the Conference Center in Woodworth.

Each retreat will begin with lunch on Monday and conclude at 11 a.m. on Thursday. The dates for 2002 are: Feb. 4-7, May 7-9, and Sept. 30-Oct. 3.

The registration fee for each year is \$800 and can be paid in installments throughout the year. Local churches are encouraged to give financial support to participants from their congregation. Continuing education credits are given each year.

Rev. Wendy Miller, from Eastern Mennonite Seminary, will be the resource person leading this training course. She has extensive experience in this area of ministry and has established the Summer Institute for Spiritual

Formation at Eastern Seminary. Persons who have been a part of Track One with The Academy have come to know her depth and keen insight. Her book, *Invitation to Presence*, is an Upper Room Publication from Nashville, Tn.

Training is open to both laity and clergy who feel drawn to this unique expression of ministry.

If you would like to have a brochure and application, or simply want to discuss this further, contact: The Academy Director, Rev. Carole Cotton Winn, 101 Byron Court, Slidell, La. 70461, (985) 639-9531, ccottonwinn@msn.com. The first class is in February of 2002, but the deadline for application is Dec. 15.

Judicial Council rules on appointment of 'self-avowed' homosexuals

BY JORETTA PURDUE

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (UMNS) – The United Methodist Church's supreme court has ruled that the denomination's book of laws does not contradict itself regarding the appointment of openly gay and lesbian clergy to congregations.

The United Methodist Judicial Council, meeting Oct. 24-26, affirmed that the denomination's Book of Discipline forbids the appointment of "self-avowed practicing homosexuals" as pastors of local churches. The nine-member court went on to say that declaring involvement in a same-gender relationship would be enough to subject a pastor to a review of his or her standing as a minister.

The case was one of 12 heard at the semi-annual session of the Judicial Council. Three of the docket items decided by the nine-member council related in some way to the church's policies on homosexuality.

The Pacific Northwest Annual (regional) Conference had asked the council to make a declaratory decision

"The denomination's book of laws does not contradict itself regarding the appointment of openly gay and lesbian clergy to congregations."

on what its members saw as an apparent conflict between two rules found in the church's Book of Discipline. One states that "a self-avowed practicing homosexual" may not be accepted as a candidate for the ordained ministry, become a clergyperson or, if already a pastor, be appointed to serve a congregation. The other rule guarantees ministerial appointments to all clergy in good standing.

A clergywoman in the conference had written a letter last February to Bishop Elias Galvan of Seattle, declaring that she was "living in a partnered, covenanted homosexual relationship with another woman." The conference asked whether that statement was sufficient to make her ineligible for an appointment.

The clergywoman, the Rev. Karen

Dammann, did not receive an appointment from the bishop last summer. A second clergy person, the Rev. Mark Edward Williams of Seattle, also did not receive an appointment after announcing at Pacific Northwest Conference's gathering last June that he was a practicing gay man. Instead, he was placed in a staff position at his church, and his district superintendent was named acting pastor pending the Judicial Council's decision. Neither Dammann nor Williams were mentioned by name in the council's Oct. 26 decision.

The Judicial Council ruled that the clergywoman's statement is a sufficient declaration to subject "her ministerial office," or status as a minister, to review. "If, in the course of such review, such person affirms that she is engaged in

genital sexual activity with a person of the same gender, she would have openly acknowledged ... that she is a self-avowed practicing homosexual," the council said in its decision.

"However, the prohibition of appointment ... must be exercised in compliance with the rights of all persons who are in full membership," the decision continued. The council said that the bishop may not take unilateral action to deny her a church appointment.

Only the annual conference can determine a change in a clergyperson's status, the council said. "The annual conference must be informed of the declaration, and the annual conference and/or the resident bishop or district superintendent must initiate proceeding to subject her membership in her ministerial office to review."

The decision briefly sketches the steps meant to provide "fair and due process," as specified in the Book of Discipline. On recommendation of the

See Ruling, page 8

Broadmoor UMC members thrive in the "Prime O' Life"

BY JOHN COOK

Members and friends of Broadmoor United Methodist Church aged 55 "and better" have an active ministry in their "Prime O' Life" organization. Members of the lively assembly have recently completed three major service projects.

Garden Plot Dubbed "Green Acres"

Begun in the spring and continuing throughout the growing season, food products have been harvested from a fertile garden plot on church property that expert gardeners from the membership carefully enriched, tilled, planted, and cared for. The productive plot first yielded a crop of Irish potatoes. Broadmoor's pre-school children were enlisted to help harvest the bumper crop. The children cheerfully and enthusiastically assisted in digging, washing, and delivering the bounty to Broadmoor's food pantry for the needy, where all the fresh produce is gratefully received. A second crop of purple-hull peas and corn also yielded an abundance for the same purpose. The rich plot is now growing a variety of late season vegetables.

"Trash to Treasury" Garage Sale

Because some members and neighbors were moving, downsizing, and clearing excess possessions, one member proposed a massive church-wide sale. On Saturday, September 8, thousands of items priced to make a bargain lover's heart leap were on display in the church gymnasium. A partial list includes furniture, appliances, electronics, exercise equipment, wheel goods, jewelry, books, kitchen utensils, and toys. Hundreds came and joyously selected their treasures from the imposing accumulation. Industrious Prime O' Life members worked together to plan the sale, accumulate and store contributed items, and set up and man the day-long event.

Most engaging of the swarms of customers were the children who happily selected books, toys, and other preferences. One inquisitive eight-year-old needed assistance removing a finger from a toy water gun barrel. As the digit was extracted with the help of soapy water and a vigorous tug, he was heard to

remark, "I can't believe I did that again!"

When the dust settled, receipts for the day totaled over \$6,000. A small portion of the money was used to purchase supplies and material to be used by the Prime O' Life volunteers to the Appalachian Service Project for the current year. The remaining funds were dedicated to Broadmoor's ongoing mission programs. Trish (Mrs. Leonard) Sedlin was the inspiration and chairperson for the sale.

Rebuilding Homes and Lives With Love and Labor in Appalachia

Twenty-one volunteers from the organization loaded two church vans, a large trailer, and private automobiles with luggage, supplies, and materials and set out to contribute their skills and care to the Appalachia Service Project near Jonesville, Virginia from September 22nd through the 30th. Participants found people who lack the strength and resources to improve their homes living in houses with crumbling walls, leaking roofs, rotting floors, dangerous wiring, and drinking water as much as five miles distant.

The three work teams threw themselves into repairs and renovations as well as offering friendship and hope to the people of the area. All who participated reported a gratifying experience as they were received with the reserved but warm and sincere gratitude of the mountain folk. All levels of skills and experience were evident among the volunteers. One missionary observed, "I did not come because I am a master carpenter, but because my Master was a carpenter." Rev. Ken Carroll, ministerial support for Prime O' Life, led the effort.

Fellowship, Spiritual Growth is Continuous

Broadmoor Prime O' Life members enjoy year-round programs including a monthly "Holy Chow" luncheon attended by some 150 participants with programs of interest to seniors and day and multi-day coach trips for recreation and sightseeing. A spiritual retreat at the Louisiana Conference Center was held on October 23rd and 24th. Wilma (Mrs. Tom) Crosby is current President of the group.



Nine gardeners from Broadmoor United Methodist Church load and till rich composted material for the beds in preparation for planting the Prime O' Life "Green Acres" prolific vegetable plot. Far left is Syble Sartin, past president and motivator for the project.



The Broadmoor UMC Prime O' Life "Garage Sale" committee is: (standing) Curtis Coco, Shirley Coco, Louise Vidacovich, P. J. Vidacovich; (seated) Trish Sedlin, chairperson, Joyce McKenzie, and Wilma Crosby, president.

Disaster training workshop slated

In response to troubled times, United Methodists are on the front lines ministering to those in spiritual and physical need with disaster response preparedness.

Terrorist expert Dave Hall will be a featured speaker at the Disaster Response Preparedness Workshop on Saturday, Dec. 1, from 10 a.m. until noon at University United Methodist Church in Baton Rouge.

Representatives from the southern, central and northern areas of the district will offer information and relief organization.

Immediately following the September 11 tragedy, District Superintendent Dr. Gerald Richardson encouraged district clergy, thanking

them and the church for all that was done to offer comfort and help.

Many district churches held prayer services or were open for prayer and counseling the week of September 11. Prayer for the families of the victims and a statement regarding United Methodists' support of tolerance were parts of many worship services. Richardson listed ways for United Methodists to continue to respond to the situation:

1. Continue to pray; 2. Give blood;
3. Send financial contributions to "Love in the Midst of Tragedy"

Advance #901125-3.
University UMC is located at 3350 Dalrymple Drive in Baton Rouge; telephone: (225) 344-0343.

Blackwater to host "Jammin' for Jesus"

"Jammin' for Jesus" is a free Christian concert featuring Matt Neely at Blackwater United Methodist Church in Baker on Saturday, Feb. 2, 2002.

Sponsored by the Baton Rouge District Committee on Youth Ministries (DCYM), the youth chose this concert as a way to glorify God, energize the Baton Rouge District, and bring Conference youth together for a free event.

The DCYM report that the event will come together by God's grace, lots of prayer, your presence and your help. They will serve jambalaya, cold drinks, hot cocoa, and hot cider.

"How can you help?" asks DCYM member Erin Sheehan. "If you know of any Christian bands or choirs or musical groups that would like to perform, ask them to contact us at brdcym@

hotmail.com, or call me at (225) 235-9709 after 2 p.m. with the following information:

What type of music do they play (fast or slow)? What time frame would they prefer (earlier or later)? The concert is free, the food is free.

Send your church's stories to the Baton Rouge District Communication Advisor:

Lynn Sheehan
P. O. Box 250
Jackson, LA 70748
(225) 634-7810
lyn_sheehan@hotmail.com



Shelves at the United Methodist Mission Center in Baton Rouge fill up as the holidays approach. But Director Ginny Mandujano, bottom right unloading pumpkin pies, says more goods, especially turkeys, are needed. Below, Sarah Williams and volunteer Aline Baird discuss the finer points of holiday cuisine.

Photos by Joshua Lewis



Mission Center, *from page 1*

Mission Center is always special," Mandujano said. "Gifts and donations come pouring in along with the wonderful spirit with which they are so freely given."

The Used Toy Shop is another means for churches and individuals to be involved in outreach. Clean children's clothes in good repair are always needed. Children's items must be on hangers. A local consignment store, "Here Today/Gone Tomorrow", will accept adult clothing, furniture and garage sale items on behalf of the center. Donations made in the name of the center will result in 50 percent of the revenue from all resale items. Is there a better reason to clean out closets, the attic or the garage?

Teddy Bears for Women is another ministry. The center has given 1,450 teddy bears and needs more. Fire leaps to Mandujano's eyes as she details the needs of the northern portion of Baton Rouge; over 90 percent of the children qualify for some type of federal assistance. The area surrounding the mission center is one of the two largest poverty areas in Baton Rouge. This community is bordered by Scenic Highway, Airline Highway and Choctaw Drive. Financial contributions are always welcome. Churches can submit funds through Advance Special #4403.

Adult and youth volunteers are in great need by the center. The list of services provided includes tutoring, Vacation Bible School and summer youth programs, emergency food, school supplies and uniforms, soup for shut-ins and partnership with the YWCA Istrouma and Glen Oaks Teen Parenting Centers. Special holiday services are also offered. Since much of Mandujano's day is spent counseling and interviewing families, an

answering machine is vital to the ministry of the center. "You don't have to talk to me to leave a donation," she urges. "Leave a message on the answering machine. The center is staffed all week long. Please, keep the

mission center in your prayers." For information and more ways to help minister through the center, contact Ginny Mandujano at (225) 355-0702.

Turkeys and other donations can be delivered Mondays through Fridays, between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. The center is located at 4643 Winbourne Avenue in Baton Rouge.



Gammon to celebrate Founder's Day in December

One hundred eighteen years of preparing leaders for ministry in The United Methodist Church has been the legacy of Gammon Theological Seminary. Founded in 1883 in connection with Clark University, Gammon is the United Methodist component of The Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Ga.

President Dr. Walter H. McKelvey will welcome alumni and friends to participate in three days of activities, Dec. 3-5.

"Ministry in the 21st Century: Inclusive Mandates", will highlight scholarship, founding, worship, and fellowship. Bishop Jonathan Keaton, Episcopal leader of the East Ohio

Conference area will be the Founders' Day Worship Speaker, Tuesday - December 4th at 11:00 a.m., Bishop Lawrence McCleskey, South Carolina Conference Area Episcopal leader will deliver the scholarly lectures for the Thirkield-Jones Lecture Series, Tuesday- December 4th at 2:30 p.m. and Wednesday-December 5th at 10:00 a.m., Bishop Othal Lakey, CME Bishop will serve as the Preacher for the Ecumenical Service, Monday-December 3, 7:30 PM at Hoosier United Methodist Church. Rev. Chester Jones, General Secretary, General Commission on Religion and Race of The United Methodist Church will be the Banquet Speaker, 7:00 p.m.,

Tuesday-December 4th, at 7:00 p.m. at the Atlanta Airport Marriott Hotel, tickets are \$50.00. Rev. Phylemon Titus of Detroit, Michigan will be the speaker for the Alumni breakfast, Wednesday, December 5th at 8:00 a.m. Rev. Edward Best, pastor of Old National Highway UMC in College Park, Georgia and Rev. Michele Sue Keller, District Superintendent, Missouri Annual Conference are being honored as Distinguished Alumni for 2001. A \$100 registration fee includes a banquet and alumni breakfast ticket. To register, contact Madelyn C. Greene, Alumni Affairs Director, Gammon Theological Seminary, 653 Beckwith St., Atlanta, GA 30314, (404) 581-0310.

WCC delegates visit

WASHINGTON (UMNS) - Eight people came as "living letters" of faith and hope from member communions of the World Council of Churches (WCC) to other Christians in the U.S. capital on Nov. 12.

Bishop Mvume Dandala of the Methodist Church of South Africa, who led the delegation, stressed that its members were not WCC officers but representatives of member churches from various parts of the world, especially those that have experienced uncertainty or violence.

"We come to you as wounded people ... to try to speak to you in your woundedness," Dandala told about 50 church workers at the United Methodist Building on Capitol Hill. He spoke of healing and hope as important goals.

Council of Bishops letter offers 'hope and peace' in wake of terrorism

"During the closing hours of their week-long meeting Nov. 5-9, the United Methodist Council of Bishops issued a pastoral letter offering words of 'hope and peace' to people struggling with the consequences and fear of terrorism."

The full text of the letter follows:

A Pastoral Letter to the Whole Church

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Grace and peace be to you in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

The sad and terrible events in the United States of America, on Sept. 11, 2001, and beyond, compel us to speak words of hope and peace to United Methodist people in the 120 annual conferences in more than 50 countries of the world. Stunned and shattered by terrorist attacks in the United States and the threat of bioterrorism, we, your bishops, call upon the church to join us in seeking solidarity with victimized peo-

ples throughout the world.

Our fervent and constant prayers are for those who grieve because they have lost companions and loved ones; for military chaplains and for those persons who are providing the ministry of presence, comfort, healing and hope; for public servants and countless volunteers who have demonstrated selfless generosity; for all who are redemptively reaching out to those persons who have been erroneously connected to terrorism; for the people who have been placed in harm's way and their loved ones; for President Bush and the leaders of all the nations that they may have wisdom and courage to lead people toward justice and peace. We pray for innocent victims who have experienced injuries, loss and death. We also pray for those who wish to do harm. We pray that violence, terrorism and war will cease. We ask you to join us in prayer.

We are extremely concerned for the thousands of people who live in fear and

terror and those displaced by war and poverty. We sincerely believe that every conceivable effort must be used to protect those who are innocent and most vulnerable. We are persuaded that we must use the spiritual and human resources of The United Methodist Church to respond in a loving and caring way. We commend churches around the world for their contribution to the appeal, "Love in the Midst of Tragedy," and all other humanitarian offerings.

We, your bishops, believe that violence in all of its forms and expressions is contrary to God's purpose for the world. Violence creates fear, desperation, hopelessness and instability. We call upon the church to be a community of peace with justice and to support individuals and agencies all over the world who are working for the common good for all of God's children. We also call upon the church to study and work toward alleviating the root causes of poverty and the other social conditions

that are exploited by terrorists.

As people of the resurrection, we believe that peace has been achieved in Christ; however, this peace is yet to be fully realized in human relationships. The message of the resurrection is that love is stronger than all the forces of evil. Furthermore, it is only sacrificial love, not war, which can reconcile people to God and to each other. We call upon the church, leaders, nations and individuals around the world to make room for love so that the patterns of our common life might reveal God's justice.

We offer this letter with the wondrous promise of Advent ringing in our ears: "But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see I am bringing to you good news of great joy for all the people.'" (Luke 2:10)

Peace,

Bishops of The United Methodist Church

UMCOR, from page 1

"much-loved neighbors" from 50-60 countries throughout the world.

UMCOR's response to the tragedy, according to Dirdak, is currently taking place on international, national and local fronts. Local response, primarily at the crash sites, comprises 75-80 percent of the agency's operations. The next largest focus is on international relief efforts.

In New York, UMCOR volunteers are involved in counseling, clean up efforts, childcare, and in manning local United Methodist churches so that they remain open for most of the day. In addition to volunteer counselors, bilingual attorneys have offered their services to thousands of families needing death certificates for their loved ones.

On the international front, UMCOR is playing a key role with relief efforts in Afghanistan. "One exciting project will be newly formed UMCOR youth houses in Tajikistan. Close to 1,500 youth will be welcome at these houses, which will focus on changing their ideas regarding war. We will help them to understand that this conflict is not good for them in an effort to break the cycle of war," said Dirdak.

The northern boundary running between Afghanistan and Tajikistan is a river filled with large islands. Currently, thousands of refugees wait on these islands for help. "We have identified 26,000 of these Afghan refugees for

assistance, and will soon be moving them to Tajikistan," said Dirdak. Other relief efforts include supplying refugees with tents, blankets, food and medicine as the weather worsens and lives are placed at greater risk.

Wendy Whiteside, assistant general secretary of UMCOR, also spoke recently about the agency's response to the crisis at a national meeting of United Methodist Association of Communicators in Nashville, Tn. "At the first of the year, UMCOR will reveal a long-range plan for response to this crisis. We may likely be the first national relief organization to publicly present such a plan," said Whiteside.

It is expected that the plan, to be executed in phases, will require a minimum of three years to implement. To date, close to \$4.5 million has been raised for the relief effort and Whiteside predicts that the final sum could reach upwards of \$12 million.

She indicated that on the local front, we can still expect two more critical peaks when intensified relief response will be necessary. "Soon, unemployment checks will be running out for certain people. Some of this will hit around Christmas time. The second peak will happen when the major disaster teams begin to pull out of the areas that have been affected. We as United Methodists must continue to offer comfort and support," said Whiteside.



Photo by Betty Backstrom

Paul Dirdak, deputy general secretary of the United Methodist Committee on Relief, speaks about the organization's multi-level response to the national tragedy of Sept. 11, to a group of volunteers and employees at the UMCOR Sager-Brown Depot in Baldwin.

Committee selects Fort Worth as site for 2008 General Conference

ROSEMONT, Ill. (UMNS) – The group responsible for planning The United Methodist Church's 2004 General Conference in Pittsburgh took time during its May 3-4 meeting to choose the site for the 2008 gathering.

The Convention Center in Fort Worth, Texas, was unanimously chosen by the 16-member Commission on the General Conference after a site selection sub-

group reported on visits to three Texas cities: Houston, San Antonio and Fort Worth.

Gary Bowen, General Conference manager, said finding a location for the international event is difficult because of its 10-day length and because of the large number of hotel and meeting rooms required. "We were very fortunate that in Texas the three cities we consid-

ered had more than adequate facilities for our conference," he said. Traditionally the site rotates among the church's five U.S. jurisdictions. The most recent conference was held in Cleveland in May 2000.

The projected budget for the 2004 conference is \$5.5 million, nearly \$2 million of which is earmarked for travel, lodging and meals of the delegates. Held

every four years, the conference includes no more than 1,000 delegates: half clergy, half laity.

About 225 of the delegates to the Pittsburgh conference, set for April 26-May 7, 2004, are expected to come from outside the United States.

Legislation approved by the delegates is included in a revised Book of Discipline.



Deaconess Hallique L. Dawson, a member of Camphor United Methodist Church in Baton Rouge, recently attended the 18th World Diakonia Assembly in Brisbane, Australia. Themed "Hearts on Fire in a New Time," the gathering of more than 600 representatives of 38 countries was an experience that will remain in her heart forever, Dawson said.

Hunger aid group focuses on Afghanistan

Raleigh, N.C. (UMNS)—When the Rev. Ray Buchanan finally entered Afghanistan with a relief assessment team in October, he felt like he'd climbed Mount Everest. The area's geographic inaccessibility, combined with other factors such as weather and the roadblocks of a post-Soviet bureaucracy, make relief work here more complex than any other location he's encountered, said Buchanan a United Methodist pastor and founder of Raleigh-based Stop Hunger Now.

Time is of the essence in a country where much of the population is vulnerable to starvation and exposure to a harsh winter. "Without assistance,

these people will be dead before the end of the year," Buchanan said. He was in Afghanistan and Tajikistan with representatives of other relief organizations to form a partnership for responding to humanitarian needs in Afghanistan.

Activities will include the distribution of food, winter clothing and blankets, along with some health care provided by a doctor and two nurses, expected to be in place by mid-November. More information is available at www.stophungernow.org or by calling toll free at (888) 501-8440. Donations can be made online at the Web site.

UMM make 'pilgrimage' to annual retreat

BY JOE BOSCH

NORTH SHORE DISTRICT UMM PRESIDENT

United Methodist Men from all over Louisiana made a pilgrimage to Woodworth on Oct. 21, in their quest for spiritual growth. The Holy Spirit spoke words of enlightenment through the lips of Bishop William Hutchinson. Not only did our Bishop deliver an inspired message, but he also played the piano to accompany the men in songs of praise. Worshipful men, led by Barney Babin, raised their voices in songs of praise of their Creator.

Participants experienced some truly precious moments in the presence of God Almighty as we heard our Bishop's message, and as we participated in the open forum discussion that accompanied his teaching.

The business meeting, which was conducted by Conference UMM President Joe Kelley, was informative, and the men were motivated to go forth and establish MENistry in every church in Louisiana.

Men were encouraged to honor the pledge they made when they joined the United Methodist Church, to be loyal to the church, to uphold it by their prayers, their presence, their gifts, and their service.

They were reminded that this pledge, or promise, was not made to the pastor; it was a pledge made to God Almighty. The men were reminded that the General Commission on United Methodist Men is a full commission of

the United Methodist Church. They were also reminded that the Book of Discipline, the instruction manual for the operation of The United Methodist Church, contains a requirement that every church shall have an annually chartered United Methodist Men's group.

The many wonderful mission projects of UMM were discussed, and President Kelley stated that he desires that UMM will be known for their powerful prayer in the manner that UMM are known for their missions. It was reiterated throughout the retreat that UMM is not an organization that merely exists to meet and eat. Nor, is it only a service organization designed to work on projects in the community. It was emphasized that UMM is designed to, and intended to, promote the spiritual growth of men.

President Kelley encouraged every man to visit his own church to pray for at least two hours each week. He stated that as a man sits in God's house and prays that God will talk to him. He stated that God will say, "Did you notice that the flower bed needs weeding? Did you notice that the front door is dirty and needs painting? Your pastor needs time to minister to the people, not to worry about the physical condition of the church, you and the men of your church should be about My work of taking care of the church. Your pastor needs your corporate prayer, and you men should gather in prayer for your pastor regularly."

Methodist Emergency Medicine Center - in an emergency, you want to be surrounded by the best!

My family and I have had to rely on the Methodist Emergency Medicine Center several times during the last few years. It's reassuring to know that comprehensive medical care is available during times of crisis. I have complete confidence in the professional medical staff at Methodist.

Larry E. Lundy

Larry E. Lundy
CEO & President of Lundy Enterprises, LLC
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Rena Yocom	Executive Director, Conference Mission and Ministries
Betty Backstrom	Editor
Joshua Lewis	Contributing Editor

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<http://www.la-umc.org>

St. Andrew's, Baton Rouge, touches New York City with banners

"His banner over us is love" - Song of Solomon 2:4b

BY LYN SHEEHAN

The concern and support of St. Andrew's United Methodist Church is highly visible at Ground Zero as a Louisiana banner flies near the Old John Street United Methodist Church in New York City.

Emblazoned with the words "Our thoughts and prayers are with you", the banners also bear the United Methodist logo and the words Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

St. Andrew's staffmember Yolanda Heath said, "The banner was placed in the outside courtyard to be signed by members of the church from the youngest child to the oldest adult."

The New York banner was received by Rev. James R. McGraw, pastor of the Old John Street church. The church is located two and one half blocks from Ground Zero.

Writing to thank St. Andrew's for their "kind expression of concern and your prayerful support at this time of trial and

crisis," McGraw reported that the New York City church is ministering to their community. The Old John Street church is the oldest Methodist society in America and was organized in 1766.

"Clearly we are richly blest and twice-protected, sheltered by the tall buildings on either side and more importantly also by the Everlasting Arms!" McGraw wrote.

Amy Butler, a member of the Louisiana church, shared that one of her friends visited New York and witnessed the devastation. The St. Andrew's newsletter relates the friend's experience: "While standing amid the rubble, she looked across the street and saw a large prayer banner from Baton Rouge with the cross and flame. Reading the banner, she noticed the name of Austin Butler, son of Amy and Blair Butler."

A special donation paid for professional production of the two prayer banners by Acadian Signs.

The United Methodist connection is more than just structure; it is concern, support and comfort.



The "Ground Zero" Prayer Banner is signed by Linda and Charlie Heard, members of St. Andrew's United Methodist Church. Every member from the youngest child to the oldest adult had the opportunity to sign the banners.

Louisiana Now! garners national accolades at UMAC convention



Photo by Joshua Lewis

This photograph of students at Bains Elementary School in St. Francisville won Best of Division for feature photography at the recent annual meeting of the United Methodist Association of Communicators in Nashville. The newspaper also received a certificate of merit for layout and design.

NASHVILLE - *Louisiana Now!*, the newspaper of the Louisiana Annual Conference, received several honors from a panel of judges at the United Methodist Association of Communicators annual meeting Nov. 9.

Louisiana Now! Contributing Editor Joshua Lewis received a Best of Division award for photography in an Annual Conference or Episcopal Area with the cover photograph from the May 25 issue of the paper.

Louisiana Now! also received a Certificate of Merit for Newspaper Layout and Design in an Annual Conference or Episcopal Area.

The award-winning photograph

accompanied a story entitled "Methodist senator's bill aims to school kids earlier," an in-depth look at Senate Bill 766 which provides funding for early-childhood education for every four-year-old in Louisiana.

Three smiling students from Bains Elementary School in St. Francisville were the subject of the photograph, which also received a Certificate of Merit in the category of "Human Interest Photo."

Rev. Bob Robertson, director of communications for the North Texas Conference headquartered in Dallas, was honored by his peers with the "Communicator of the Year" award.

Ruling, from page 3

executive committee of the conference board of ordained ministry, a bishop places the person on suspension while the process moves forward. Suspension relieves the person from clergy duties but does not remove him or her from an appointment if the person is already serving a church.

"At all times, the [church] constitutional right of the clergy person to trial by a committee and an appeal shall be preserved ... and fair and due process shall be observed," the council stated.

"If at the end of the process, the conference relation of the clergyperson is not changed, then the clergyperson remains in good standing and, if an elder in full connection, shall be continued under appointment by the bishop," the council said.

Four council members signed a supplementary opinion: the Rev. Larry Pickens, Sally Curtis AsKew, Rodolfo C. Beltran and Sally Brown Geis. They agreed with main points of the decision but added that "in essence The United Methodist Church has a 'don't ask, don't tell' policy with respect to gay and lesbian clergy. This reality is heightened when fair process provisions are overlooked or violated."

Before deliberating and deciding the case, the council heard oral arguments during an open hearing Oct. 25. Williams spoke on the issue, describing how much his ministry meant to him and asking that the council observe fair process. Two others also addressed the court: Susan Griffin, an attorney representing Dammann, and Jon Olson, a

member of Williams' congregation in Seattle.

In another case from the Pacific Northwest, the council reviewed a decision of law made by Bishop Galvan at the conference's annual June meeting. The bishop had been asked to rule on whether it would be appropriate to spend conference funds for a special called session of the Western Jurisdictional Conference. The Pacific Northwest is one of the annual conferences that make up The United Methodist Church's Western Jurisdiction. The five U.S. jurisdictions meet regularly once every four years, and their next gatherings will be in 2004.

The council agreed with Galvan that the request regarding the expenditure of funds was moot and hypothetical because no special session has been called. Only the jurisdiction's College of Bishops has the power to call a special session, and the college has not done so, the council noted. United Methodists in the Western Jurisdiction have discussed holding a called session to discuss the "We Will Not Be Silent" declaration, which the jurisdiction passed in 2000 in support of diversity and the full inclusion of sexual minorities in the life of the church.

The council also affirmed a decision of law by Bishop William W. Dew Jr. of Phoenix regarding the "We Will Not Be Silent" statement. At last summer's gathering of the Desert Southwest Annual Conference, Dew ruled that a resolution supporting "We Will Not Be Silent" did not violate the Book of Discipline.

Mission agency seeks Sept. 16 sermons

NEW YORK (UMNS) - The United Methodist Board of Global Ministries is seeking copies of sermons delivered on or around Sept. 16, the Sunday following the tragic events of Sept. 11.

The Rev. ST Kimbrough Jr., the board's executive for mission evangelism, said the agency is seeking sermons

"particularly dealing with the themes of hope, healing, peace, reconciliation and justice." Prayers, litanies and hymns also are welcome. Items for consideration, limited to 1,500 to 2,000 words, can be mailed to the Board of Global Ministries, Room 360, New York, NY 10115, or sent by e-mail to skimbrou@gbgm-umc.org.

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NEWS,
OPPORTUNITIES AND
WITNESS OF LOUISIANA
CONFERENCE MINISTRIES

VOL. 2, NO. 23

BATON ROUGE, LA

December 7, 2001

New director appointed to Conference Center

Richard Bushnell, formerly Alexandria district missionary, has been appointed as new director for the Conference Center in Woodworth.

Bushnell has been serving as interim director since October after former director Thomas Robertson accepted a similar post in another conference.

"God is opening doors for me, and I have a tremendous peace about this new opportunity," said Bushnell.

"I am working with a wonderful Christian staff, willing to do anything to anything to make this the best center for spiritual renewal." Bushnell is excited about the center's future, and hopes to

help facilitate expansion of facilities and services. "There have been discussions about implementing a trails project, adding a pavillion, and setting up the grounds to encourage more camping. I believe that there is much potential for growth, and am blessed to be serving God in this capacity," said Bushnell.

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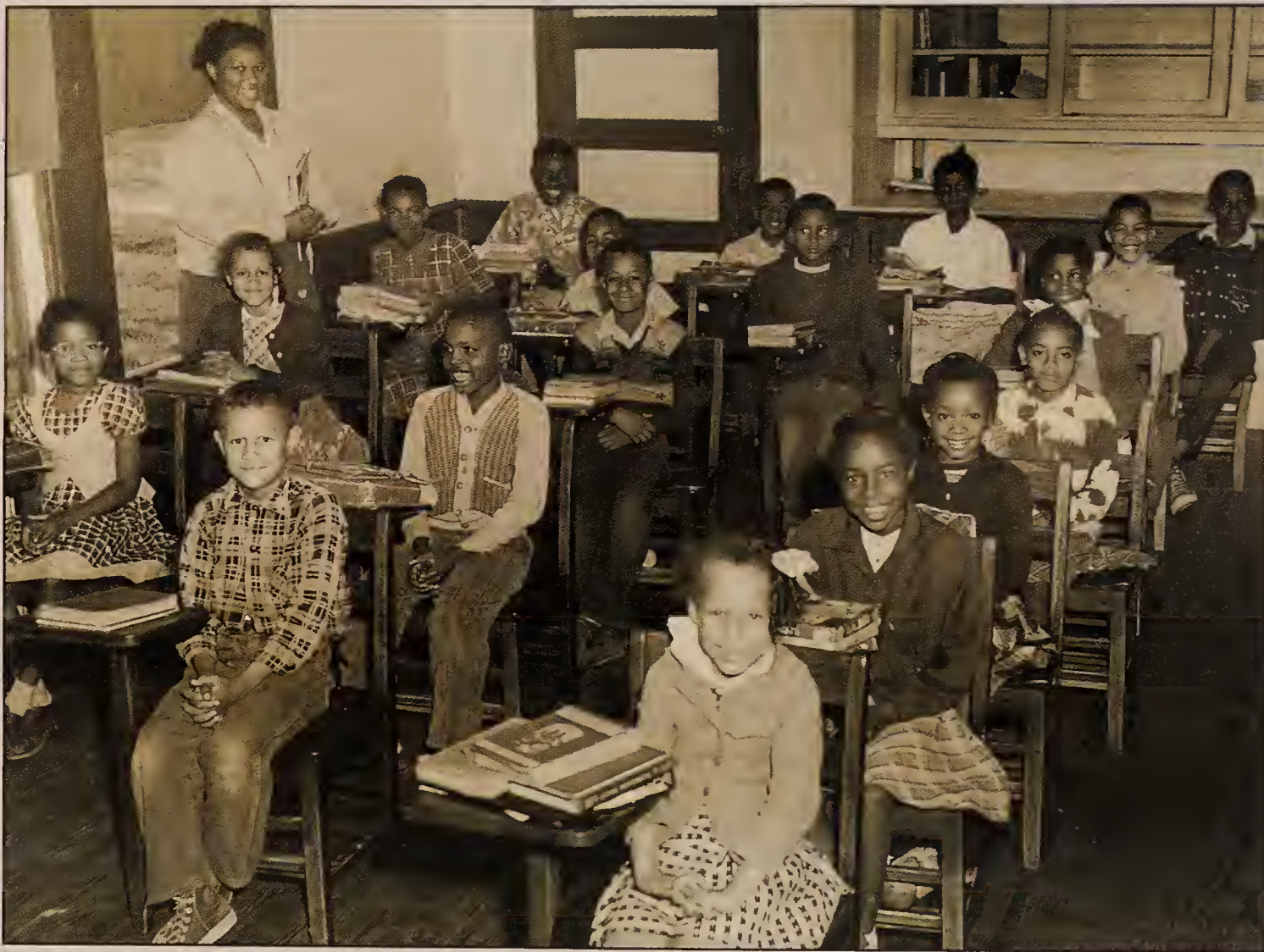


Slidell church salutes local heroes /4



Church hosts sign language workshop /5

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Smiling faces fill a classroom in this historic photograph from The Sager-Brown Orphanage and Godman School in Baldwin. A former plantation, the institution first opened in 1867 to serve African-American children orphaned by the Civil War. The school remained open until 1978. Amid the destruction of Hurricane Andrew in 1992, the facility was reopened as a depot for the United Methodist Committee on Relief and its community outreach activities continue as well.

UMCOR Sager-Brown continues tradition of giving

BY BETTY BACKSTROM
EDITOR

Out of the ashes of the Civil War rose an institution that reached out to house and educate poor, African-American children. From the devastation of Hurricane Andrew, that same institution was reborn in this century as an international center for disaster response.

That institution is none other than UMCOR Sager-Brown, located in Baldwin, La.

For Louisiana United Methodists, UMCOR Sager-Brown Depot is best known as a 48,000-square-foot warehouse where material goods are received, held and distributed for national and international emergency response.

"Thousands of flood buckets were shipped from the depot earlier this year after Tropical Storm Allison caused widespread flooding. Tons of blankets, food, medical and school supplies are shipped annually to meet

the needs of the world. And most recently, our staff and volunteers are reaching out to those in need in our local community," said the Rev. Bob Townsend, Sager-Brown's director.

The depot is a joint project of United Methodist Women, United Methodist Committee on Relief, and the Mission Volunteers Unit of the General Board of Global Ministries. Many Conference youth and adults

See Sager-Brown, page 6

ON THE JOURNEY

My Hope and Stay

Life has so many interesting connections and contrasts. Yesterday I went to Our Lady of the Lake hospital for a medical procedure. When we entered the building, there sat Bob Burgess and Brian Yeich with one of the members from Broadmoor United Methodist Church here in Baton Rouge. Her husband was having the same procedure I was to have just a couple of hours later. It was so comforting to see familiar faces in a strange waiting room and to know others were encountering the same concern as I was.

Later in the morning, after I had been "put to bed" and was waiting for the procedure to happen, other familiar faces appeared in my hospital room. How strengthening to know that there were those who would pray with me and sit with Kay while I was having the procedure. The connections in our church are so very strong.

The day was spent calmly and in an atmosphere of assurance. I felt everything would come out well and it did. Following the test I was confined to bed for several hours while the small incision healed and I was able to get up and walk around without loss of blood. Actually, I slept through most of the day groggy from the medicine I had been given to relax me. (Aren't modern drugs great?!) I was released about 7:00 p.m. and we were back home with happy phone calls to make to family and loved ones telling them that all was well.

This morning I got up with a smile on my face, a limp in my walk, and a celebration of a whole new world. Then just a few minutes ago I got a call from my office that there had been a death in our office family. Mike Spears, husband of Shirlene, one of our office support staff, had died suddenly and unexpectedly. The family was at Our Lady of the Lake hospital where I was yesterday. I had joyfully been wheeled out of that building with good news ringing in my ears. The Spears family was there with the worst news of all, the death of a loved one.

Isn't it mystifying how life unfolds? For some it is positive. For others it is



Bishop William W. Hutchinson

"How strengthening to know that there were those who would pray with me. The connections in our church are so very strong."

negative. For some there is good news. For others there is devastating news. The tension between hope and despair is always present. But, praise God, the good news always outweighs the bad and hope always overcomes despair.

It was into the same kind of world that Jesus of Nazareth was born. Hope was high among the people that some day there would be a savior born who would lead them out of bondage and into freedom. However, oppression and hard life were the order of the day. While faith spoke of hope, reality reflected despair. This baby, born into the most meager and desperate of physical surroundings, was to be the king of the world. How paradoxical it all is.

I've been sobered this morning. My excitement about a personal clean bill of health has been tempered by the death of another pilgrim in life's journey. But rising above it all is the overall truth that to us is "born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." That message of Advent and Christmas cuts through the hurts, disappointments and pains of our day-to-day life and gives us ultimate hope. On that hope hangs the progression of all the ages. That is the hope that gives us peace even in the midst of despair. Our ultimate hope is in Jesus Christ, the giver of every good and bountiful gift.

My sympathy is extended to Shirlene Spears and family. My gratitude is extended to Jesus Christ our Lord. My support and care is extended to each of you who find life both joyful and distressing. May you find your journey filled with the knowledge that "when all around my soul gives way, he then is all my hope and stay."

In Christ's love,

Bill Hutchinson



A UMNS photo by Woody Woodrick

Richard (left) and Shawna Grimes and their children eat lunch at the Chimneyville Smokehouse restaurant in Jackson, Miss., where reminders to "say the blessing" are on each table.

Mississippi church encourages diners to remember the blessing

BY WOODY WOODRICK

JACKSON, Miss. (UMNS) — Many folks pause before eating at home to thank God for their food, but it happens less often in restaurants.

In Jackson, patrons of three popular restaurants have a reminder to say the "blessing." Chimneyville Smokehouse, BoDon's and George's Cafeteria feature laminated cards on their tables with a brief blessing. The cards were placed by Epworth United Methodist Church.

The cards have drawn a positive response since being placed on the tables four months ago. In fact, Deborah Kees of BoDon's credits the blessings with improving business.

"We're Christians and believe in praying over a meal," she said. "Our business has picked up since we started putting the blessings on the tables."

The table blessings are an idea that the Rev. Tom Sorrell, pastor at Epworth, has wanted to try for several years. "This has been my idea since I was down on the (Gulf Coast), and it just never got instituted," he said. "I had written most of the prayers down there. One of the problems was we couldn't find a family restaurant that would do it. Chain restaurants won't let you do it."

Recently, he suggested Epworth try placing the blessings. The church

leaders liked the idea.

"We contacted George's Cafeteria, and the guy leasing it at the time wanted to do it, but we never got it all worked out," Sorrell said. "We went to BoDon's, and they were the first. Then (the original owner) re-opened George's and he has done it. Then we added Chimneyville."

Seven different non-sectarian prayers were written and printed on cards about the size of an index card. They were laminated and placed in small stands next to the salt, pepper and hot sauce. Church members who helped prepare the cards include Susan Aalwine, Epworth's day care director, church secretary Nancy Martin and B.B. Triplett, the church's family life director.

The prayers are placed so each table has a different prayer from the ones nearby.

Sorrell said one of the most exciting aspects of the outreach effort is its ecumenical nature. None of the restaurant owners involved is United Methodist. Yet, when approached with the idea, none hesitated to go along.

"After it was all said and done, we put them in restaurants where the ownership was not even Methodist," Sorrell said. "This makes it an ecumenical effort, and that's very special to me."

Perkins to host youth ministry workshop

The Perkins School of Youth Ministry at Southern Methodist University in Dallas will host, "Discover Your Treasure," a conference focused on seeking fellowship with colleagues to uncover new ideas, resources and approaches to youth ministry Jan. 11-18, 2002.

Featured speakers and worship leaders at the event include Tex Sample and

Celia Whitler. Workshops will cover a wide range of topics: spiritual formation, the inner-city experience, small church youth ministry, writing grant requests, computers for beginners and pastors as youth ministers, among others.

For more information, call (888) THEOLOGY or (214) 768-3515, or send an e-mail to perkins@mail.smu.edu.

LETTERS POLICY

LouisianaNow! reserves space on this page for readers to express their views. LouisianaNow! is not responsible for the opinions expressed. Letters are not to exceed 450 words. Libelous or offensive personal attacks are unacceptable. Letters must include the author's signature, as well as correct address and telephone number, which will not be published, to facilitate verification. Send letters to Editor, LouisianaNow!, 527 North Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70802.

Primetimers programs announces schedule of events for 2002

Primetimers, a new United Methodist program for persons fifty years and older, is pleased to announce some of the upcoming events for 2002. These events offer mature adults opportunities for travel, education, mission service opportunities and spiritual reflection. The program is open to all persons – Methodist and non-Methodist. This is only a partial listing; more events will be added, as information is available.

There is much excitement about the variety of events and locations where these events will be offered. It is important to register as early as possible to ensure a place in the event.

Interested persons can request an applications or further information by calling the toll free number for Primetimers, (877) 882-4724 or by sending your request to Nancy Osgood, Coordinator of Primetimers, GBGM, Mission Volunteers, 475 Riverside Dr., Suite 1374, New York, NY 10115.

To keep updated on the program, request to be placed on the email listserver. Send an empty e-mail message from your preferred email address to:

UMPrimetimers-suscribe@yahoo.com.

Primetimers Events List For 2002

(For application and registration please call (877) 882-4724)

"From French Explorers To NASA Space Center"

Program Code 2GSA
Gulfside United Methodist Assembly
Waveland, Mississippi
January 15-20, 2002

Cost: \$490.00 [includes room, meals, local transportation, program and insurance]

Contact person on site: Diane Chapman, (228) 818-5467

"Heart Of The Blue Ridge Mountain"

Program Code 2HRLC
Hinton Rural Life Center
Hayesville, North Carolina
March 3-9, 2002

Cost: \$477.00 [includes room, meals, local transportation, program and insurance]

Contact person on site: Tara Culp Lain, (828) 389-8336 or (828) 389-6753

"And God Created The Heavens And They Were Good"

Program Code 1OSLC
Oakwood Spiritual Life Center
Syracuse, Indiana
April 21-26, 2002

Cost: \$485.00 [includes room, meals, local transportation, program and insurance]

Contact person on site: Marlies Selent-West, (219) 457-5600

"Food For Thought—and Action, Networking Global Hunger Solutions"

Program Code 1ECHO
ECHO, Inc. at the ECHO Farms
N. Fort Meyers, Florida
Dates: April 16-19, 2002

Cost: \$480.00 [includes room, food local transportation, program and insurance]

Contact person on site: Carole Maddox, Tel. (941) 543-3246 ext. 210

"From Circuit Rider To World Mission"

Program Code 1NWCC
The New Windsor Conference Center
New Windsor, Maryland
Dates: April 28-May 3, 2002

Cost: \$350.00 [includes room, meals, local transportation, program and insurance]

Contact person on site: Joseph Buss, Tel. (410) 635-8700

"Food For Thought—and Action, Networking Global Hunger Solutions"

Program Code 2ECHO
ECHO Inc., at the ECHO Farm
N. Fort Meyers, Florida
Date: October 8-11, 2002

Cost: \$480.00 [includes room, meals, local transportation, program and insurance]

Contact person on site: Carole Maddox, (941) 543 3246 ext. 210

"The Way of Islam"

Program Code 3GSA
Gulfside United Methodist Assembly
Waveland, Mississippi
Date: October 8-13, 2002

Cost: \$490.00 [includes room, meals, local transportation, program and insurance]

Contact person on site: Diane Chapman, Tel. (228) 818-5467

"Walking the Lewis and Clark Journey in the Moccasins of the Nez Perce Indians"

Program Code 1WLC
Wallowa Lake Camp—a rustic event
Joseph, Oregon
Date: August 25-31, 2002

Cost: \$350.00 [includes room, meals, local transportation, program and insurance]

Contact persons on site: Lisa Jean Hoefner or Paul Jewell, Tel. (800) 593-7539, ext. 26

"Blazing The Oregon Trail: Native Tribes, Lewis and Clark, Trappers, Pioneers and Railroads"

Program Code 1ACRC
Alton Collins Retreat Center
Eagle Creek, Oregon
Date: June 2-7, 2002

Cost: \$452.00 [includes room, meals, local transportation, program and insurance]

Contact person on site: Miranda Lovegren, Tel. (503) 637-6411

"Gorgeous Gorge and the Cascading Mountains"

Program Code 2ACRC
Alton Collins Retreat Center
Eagle Creek, Oregon
Date: August 11-16, 2002

Cost: \$452.00 [includes room, meals, local trans-

portation, program and insurance]

Contact person on site: Miranda Lovegren, (503) 637 6411

"Down On The Bayou Teche"

Program Code 3SBD
UMCOR Sager Brown
Baldwin, Louisiana
Date: May 19-25, 2002

Cost: \$450.00

Contact person on site: Lonnie Simoneaux, Tel. (337) 923-6238

"The Land of Lincoln, Walking in the footsteps of Abraham Lincoln"

Program Code 1MWDC
The United Methodist Mid-west Distribution Center
Chatham, Illinois

Date: TBA

Cost: TBA

Contact person on site: Jack Travelstead, Tel. (217) 483-7911

"Down On The Bayou Teche"

Program Code 4SBD
UMCOR Sager-Brown
Baldwin, Louisiana

Dates: October 27-November 2, 2002

Cost: \$450.00

Contact person on site: Lonnie Simoneaux, Tel. (337) 923-6238

"The Church & the United Nations-Thinking Globally & Acting Locally"

Program Code 2CUN
UMC Office at the Church Center for the United Nations

New York, NY

Dates: TBA

Cost: TBA

Contact person on site: Kendra Dunbar, Tel. (212) 682-3633

"Preserving the Wealth of Flora and Fauna in Costa Rica"

Program Code 1UBLCR
Universidad Biblica Latinoamericana
San Jose', Costa Rica

Dates: April 20-27, 2002

Cost: \$734.00 [includes room, meals, transportation for event activities, program and insurance]

Contact person: Jeannie McGinnis, Tel. # 011- (506) 224-2791, ctmcgin@racsa.co.cr.

"Understanding the Bible from the Latin American Reality"

Program Code 2UBLCR
Universidad Biblica Latinoamericana
San Jose', Costa Rica

Dates: November 24-December 1, 2002

Cost: \$734.00 includes room, meals, and transportation for event activities, program and insurance]

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Devotional resurrected by Boy Scout to be sent to troops overseas

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (UMNS) — U.S. military commanders have agreed to allow a United Methodist agency to send copies of a devotional book to the 1 million service men and women stationed around the world.

With this permission, the denomination's Commission on United Methodist Men begins a nationwide effort to raise \$3 million to send Strength for Service to God and Country to U.S. service men and women responding to the war on terrorism. The devotional was first sent

to provide spiritual comfort to U.S. military personnel following the Dec. 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor, which drew America into World War II.

Announcement of the military's approval of the devotional was made by the Rev. Jim Townsend, a United Methodist clergyman who served 26 years as an Air Force chaplain. He recognized the need for such a book while serving in Vietnam.

"Dealing with the wounded, dying and desperately lonely service persons

convinced me of the urgency of having such materials," said the former Air Force colonel. "No such material was available at that time."

Townsend, a former executive of the United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry, said senior leaders of the armed forces chaplains' services were cautious when they first heard the proposal. The military has received hundreds of requests to send promotional materials to U.S. service personnel. However, when senior chap-

lain leaders learned that the book contains 365 daily devotions written by leading Protestant clergy, and that the book had been helpful to the U.S. soldiers, sailors and Marines during World War II, they warmed to the idea. Supplemental devotions by current Protestant leaders and entries from Islamic clerics and Jewish rabbis will be included.

Plans to republish the devotional were first developed by a Boy Scout long before the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on America.

Mission to Mt. Sequoyah



The Rev. Dr. Larry Maddin (Pastor Emeritus, St. Timothy) recently led a Volunteers in Mission trip to Mount Sequoyah in Fayetteville, Ark. Mt. Sequoyah is a Christian conference and retreat center offering opportunities for learning, living, and leisure to groups from churches, educational institutions, community organizations or families. The participants, Larry and Gayle Maddin, Sue and Mike Doolittle, Ken and Celia Musick, Dale Hubert, Bob Sanchez, Allen Tuten, Don Conner, and Bill Jackson, spent Sept. 22-30 painting, doing light repair work, and gardening at the center.



First United Methodist Church in Slidell recently held a "Salute to Our Heroes," honoring the men and women of the local police force, fire department, Red Cross and other rescue and relief agencies that improve the quality of life in the community.

First UMC, Slidell, offers 'salute to heroes'

On Nov. 15, First United Methodist Church hosted its first annual "Salute to our Heroes." The dinner was held in honor of local firefighters, police officers, Red Cross workers and other rescue workers. It was our way of saying "thank you" to those who protect us and bring us aid. Too often we overlook or take for granted these heroes. But the events of September 11, have helped us refocus as a nation and realize that true heroes are those who help improve the quality of life in our communities.

The idea originated with Social Concerns and Mission task forces at First Church because everyone wanted "To Do Something" to express our appreciation and patriotism. The response from the community and from First Church was overwhelming. More than 150 guests and their families enjoyed an evening of great food and an inspiring program of music and images.

The entire church family pitched in to

make this an awesome event. United Methodist Men prepared meat, Social Concerns decorated the Family Life Center, First Church Children made an American Flag with their handprints, teens waited tables, choirs sang, and church members loaded the tables with delicious food.

One fireman said, "It feels great to know that folks really care, I can't wait until next year!"

Send your church's stories to the
North Shore District
Communication Advisor:

Rev. Brady Whitton
355 Asbury Dr.
Mandeville, LA 70471-3136
(504) 626-3307
bswhitton@earthlink.net



Children at the Claiborne United Methodist Church day care experience the flag as part of an event honoring the victims of the Sept. 11 attacks.

Claiborne 'little ones' experience flag

REV. BOB HAYES
PASTOR, CLAIBORNE AND WILHITE UMCs

Airline pilots came up with the idea as a means to honor their fellow pilots, flight crews and flight attendants that were killed in the September 11 attack on America. The flag began in Boston, Mass., with a final destination of Los Angeles. On their way they came down Cypress Street in West Monroe where the children at Claiborne Elementary School were in front waving their flags and cheering as well as the "little ones" in front of Claiborne United Methodist Church day care.

They took the flag into the school

yard so the children could see it and touch it. While one of the runners was doing this, one of the pilots came over to the day care parking lot and began talking to me. As he talked with sweat running down his face, it could not cover the tears that were filling his eyes and running down his cheek. He told me that they were shocked by the welcoming crowds they were receiving and he would bring the flag across so our "little ones" could be a part of this along with the children at the school. After a time of looking at the flag and touching the flag, they were sent on their way with God's blessing.

Little Creek UMC celebrates homecoming

Recently, Little Creek United Methodist Church celebrated its homecoming with 100 people in attendance. In preparation for this event, they put a new roof on the church building. They have also been given a new steeple by Betty and Jay Cummins.

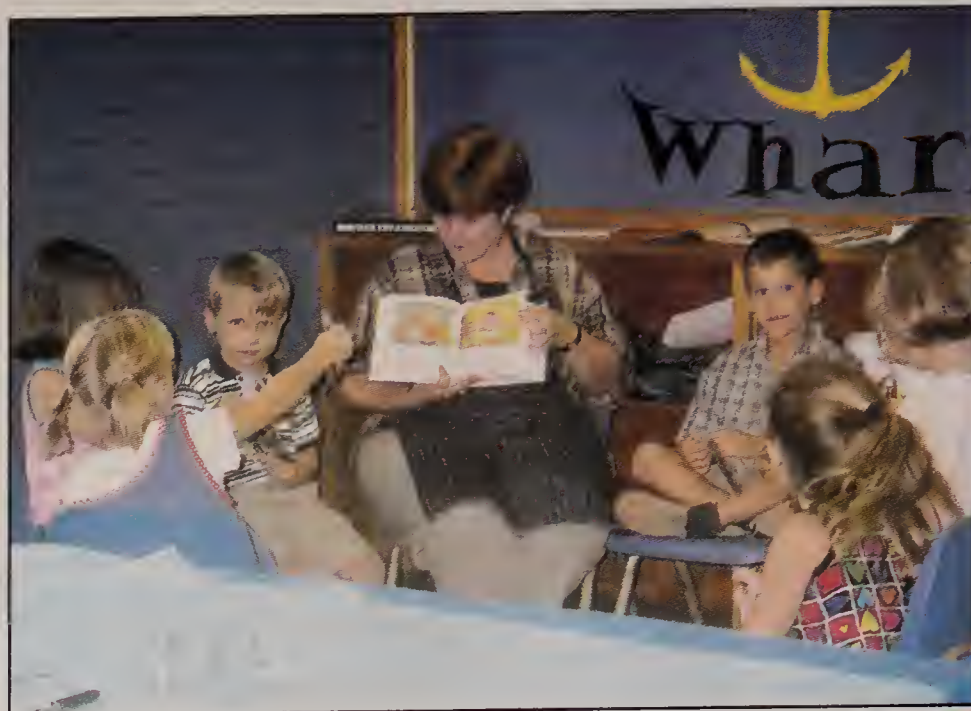
Also, Little Creek UMC recently started three new Sunday school classes for different age groups. The congregation has had a consistent attendance of 45

and have had a recent addition of six adults and three children to their church family. The pastor, Rev. Howard Childs, says "What a joy to be in service for Him!"

The congregation says, "We at Little Creek have discovered the congregation is filled with wonderful, talented people. The Sunday worship services have seen various musical, storytelling and preaching skills used for His Glory."



Claiborne United Methodist Church in West Monroe recently hosted, "Experiencing Sign Language," a day-long workshop for those wanting to learn more about communicating with the hearing-impaired. More than 50 people attended the event.



Jennie Henry teaches the children about "Joseph and His Coat of Many Colors" in the Rotation Workshop Sunday School in "Captain Paul's Wharf" at St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Monroe.

St. Paul's UMC transforms Sunday School

BY JILL MOUK

Sunday school at St. Paul's has transformed during the last few months. With the help of many volunteers, boring Sunday school rooms have become beautiful places to play and learn. This has been an exciting and challenging change but the results have been terrific. Recruiting teachers has become easier. The number of children in Sunday school has increased. And, most importantly, children experience God's word! They are learning the Bible stories.

Students move to a different workshop each Sunday. Workshops are named with the theme in mind and students have a different activity in each room. For instance in "Captain Paul's Wharf," they use food to learn the Bible story. In "Camp Eden," children sit around the "campfire" and learn important Bible truths. In "Let There Be Light," they dress up and act out the Bible story. There are a total of six workshops for cooking, art, drama, games, media, and Bible knowledge. The theme for St. Paul's program is "And God Said..." and it glorifies God's Creation.

They have completed two rotations entitled "Joseph and His Coat of Many Colors" and "Zap! Slay the Giant." The next rotation is for Advent and Christmas entitled "For Unto Us a Child Is Born." The children, parents, and staff at St. Paul's are excited about this new program. If you have questions about how the church got started, contact Jill Mouk (318) 322-4454 at St. Paul's UMC.

Mt. Olive UMC hosts women's retreat

Mt. Olive United Methodist Church in Bastrop hosted its second annual Bastrop Women's Conference on Nov. 3. The theme of the conference was "Faithful Servants of the Living God - Today is Your Day."

The speakers were Ronda Williams of Liberty Christian Center in Monroe and Pastor Barbara Ward of the New Direction Fellowship Church of Rayville.

Williams' subject was, "We need a true token." Ward spoke on the topic of "Givers and Receivers."

Pastor Mary Anne Collie of St. James UMC and Baskin UMC spoke on the subject "Girl Talk - No Men Allowed." Women and men from all over north Louisiana came to this event.

The youngest woman was 13 and the oldest was 88. The music was provided by recording artist Renee Williams of Liberty Christian. She can certainly lift up the name of Jesus.

On Monday morning, one of the persons who attended the event stated that Renee must have been singing as if she were in heaven already.

On Tuesday after the event, women

were still talking about the blessing they received from God through each of the ministers.

God has given Mt. Olive's pastor, Rev. Johnny Riley Jr. a vision to minister to women on issues they are facing each and every day.

Many women were set free from the strongholds put on them and now they are moving forward with their lives.

One woman said, "Can we have another one next week?"

Tapes of the messages and songs are also available by calling Riley at (318) 361-3830.

Send your church's stories to the
Monroe District Missioner:

Jana Smith
909 N. 18th St., Suite 206
Monroe, LA 71201
(318) 325-7335
janamissioner@cs.com

Hospital chaplain ministers to body and spirit

The pastoral care staff at Our Lady of Lourdes hospital in Lafayette has been expanded and enhanced over recent years with the addition of Protestant Chaplains to its ranks.

The Lourdes pastoral care department functions as an integral part of their ministry to the whole person – physically, mentally, and spiritually – in an innovative approach to health care. In so doing, the staff is attentive to the differing needs of persons from various faith traditions. All chaplains are fully certified with either the National Association of Catholic Chaplains or the Association of Professional Chaplains.

The United Methodist chaplain on staff is Rev. Walton Dunbar. Chaplain Dunbar, a native of Opelousas, has served pastorates in North Carolina,

New Mexico, and has recently returned to Louisiana, where he holds membership in the Louisiana Annual Conference and lives in Opelousas.

In addition to general chaplaincy duties, Chaplain Dunbar works with the Comfort Care Team, which has a unique interdisciplinary philosophy.

“To support the physical, spiritual and emotional needs of patients with life threatening illnesses; to enhance the quality of life of each patient; and, to extend the healing ministry of Jesus Christ to all we have the privilege to serve.

Walt, as his friends know him, also specializes in the healing of grief with individuals and groups, and is a certified play therapist. He can be reached at the Chaplain's office at (337) 289-2196.

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Sager-Brown, from page 1

have joined the more than 2,000 volunteers from across the country that come annually to the facility to volunteer.

These volunteers can be found wrapping health kits, grouping school supplies, and assembling flood buckets, which are sent to help those touched by natural disasters and those who have non-emergency, critical needs. Sometimes, workers are found loading trucks with shipments of goods headed to areas affected by the most recent hurricane or earthquake.

As winter approaches, RV's filled with retirees descend upon the campus seeking warmer weather and "heart-warming" work. Dormitories are available for short-term stays and apartments are provided for volunteers who work more than two weeks.

Most of these volunteers know only a little about the long, important history of Sager-Brown, which first began in 1867 as a residence and school designed to serve African-American children who were orphaned by the Civil War. Located on what was originally the site of a plantation, "The Orphan Home" (as it was called) began to struggle financially in the early 1920's.

Dr. W. D. Godman, director of the facility and a Methodist missionary, gathered several of the young women at the facility and began a tour of the northern states as the "Jubilee Singers." During the tour, Mrs. Addie Sager of Syracuse and Mrs. C. W. Brown of Elmira, New York were so impressed by the group that they together purchased the school for what was to become the



Photos by Betty Backstrom

Enjoying the view from the newly constructed pier on Bayou Teche at the UMCOR Sager-Brown Depot are Lonnie Simoneaux, director of Community Services; Marsha Alexander, director of Outreach Ministries; Rev. Robert Townsend, executive director; and Micki Townsend, museum curator for Sager-Brown. Under Simoneaux's direction, the pier was recently completed with much volunteer support. The spot is a popular place for visitors to take a break between work sessions and meetings. At left, volunteers go about the ritual of packing health kits.

United Methodist Women's Division. The school operated until 1978, when it finally closed its doors.

The facility remained dormant until 1992 when it was reopened by The United Methodist Church to serve as a disaster relief center after Hurricane Andrew swept across southern Louisiana.

In 1996, Sager-Brown's expansive warehouse was finished. The first of its kind for The United Methodist Church, the depot continues to serve a key role in national and worldwide relief efforts.

Sager-Brown continues to expand its global efforts while developing ministries on the "home front." Lonnie Simoneaux, director of Community Services and Facilities, has led Sager-Brown's efforts in a housing rehabilitation program for needy families in the St. Mary Parish area.

Marsha Alexander, director of

Outreach Ministries, has led the task of organizing a six-week children's summer camp, facilitated a blood drive, and is working with the coordination of Baldwin's first Christmas parade.

Exciting new volunteer opportunities are being planned, such as special weekends for grandparents and grandchildren to come and work together.

The 18-acre campus is situated on Bayou Teche, which can be admired from a recently constructed pier located on the water. A growing gift shop features unique items from international craftsmen and local artists, including wooden toys from third world countries, Cajun folk pieces, and crafts from the Mennonites.

United Methodists who have not yet had an opportunity to visit and volunteer at UMCOR Sager-Brown Depot might want to plan a trip to this truly unique center.



A UMNS photo

LABYRINTH — A new spiritual labyrinth is dedicated at the United Methodist General Council on Ministries office in Dayton, Ohio, Nov. 19. Daniel K. Church (center), the agency's top staff executive, helps lead the ceremony. The labyrinth was built in a publicly accessible setting as a form of outreach to the community.

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Church condemns human cloning

BY DEAN SNYDER

WASHINGTON (UMNS) — Immediately following the announcement by a New England firm that it has cloned human life, a United Methodist national board joined a coalition of strange political bedfellows to call for a ban on human cloning.

Jaydee R. Hanson, a staff executive of the United Methodist Board of Church and Society, supported the ban during a Capitol Hill press conference with representatives of seven other groups, ranging from progressive environmental and pro-choice organizations to the religious right and right-to-life councils. The press conference was sponsored by Sen. Sam Brownback, R-Kan., also a United Methodist, who said he will push for legislation to ban cloning before the Senate's Christmas recess.

"It may be a surprise to some of the press that a denomination that supports a woman's right to choose is here," Hanson told 75 reporters and a dozen TV cameras gathered in the Russell Senate Office Building for the Nov. 26 press conference.

Other religious groups participating were the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Christian Coalition.

Hanson said that the 2000 General Conference, the United Methodist Church's top legislative assembly, adopted a resolution calling for "a complete and total ban" of the kind of activities being conducted by Advanced Cell Technologies, the Massachusetts firm that announced on Nov. 25 that it has begun to make cloned human embryos.

"The church called for a ban on all human cloning, including the cloning of

human embryos," Hanson told reporters. "It also called for a ban on therapeutic, medical, research and commercial procedures which generate waste embryos."

Cloning and abortion are "very different" ethical issues, Hanson said during an interview following the press conference. "It is one thing for a woman and her family to make a really hard decision in a tragic situation," he said. "It is another thing for scientists in a lab to patent human embryos, to make a bank of human embryos, and the only way you can get to it is by paying them money."

The church saw what was happening in the industry and didn't want to support it, he said. "Do we really want an industry that depends on paying poor women for their eggs to do research?"

The resolution opposing human cloning passed by General Conference in 2000 was the result of a study done by the Board of Church and Society's Genetic Science Task Force formed in 1988.

"United Methodists were in the forefront of policy development on this," Hanson said. "Our genetic science task force looked at the research that was being done and looked at what was likely to be done and said 'no.'"

During the press conference, Hanson expressed concern that discussions about the work being done by Advanced Cell Technologies might result in confusion about the difference between cloning and stem cell research.

"The creation of human embryos by cloning or other procedures is not necessary to pursue adult, placental or even embryonic stem cell research," he said.

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E-mail: umdf@gbgm-umc.org

General Board of Global Ministries • The United Methodist Church





A UMNS photo by Paul Jeffrey / Action by Churches Together

AFGHAN REFUGEES — These young girls at the Shamshatoo refugee camp outside Peshawar, Pakistan, are among millions of Afghan civilians who face hunger unless aid workers are able to get emergency supplies moving quickly. Continued fighting between the Taliban and Northern Alliance fighters and bombing by U.S. warplanes have convinced many truck drivers not to risk navigating the road over the Khyber Pass, aid workers reported.

Aid to Afghanistan hits road blocks

BY PAUL JEFFREY

PESHAWAR, Pakistan (UMNS) — While the world's media provide round-the-clock coverage of a war that seems to be nearing its end, aid workers on the Afghanistan border report growing frustration that they are still unable to provide assistance to most of the Afghans left at risk throughout the besieged country.

"Watching the country only on the television, it would seem to be easy. Yet the task of providing aid seems only to be getting more difficult," said Kjell Godtfredsen, director of the emergency program in Peshawar for Norwegian Church Aid, a member of Action by Churches Together (ACT), an international network of church disaster agencies. The United Methodist Committee on Relief is another ACT member responding to the Afghan crisis.

Citing poor security, the United

Nations has so far only been able to install 20 international staff workers at its office in Kabul, and their travel is limited to the boundaries of the city. The United Nations has reopened an office in Mazar-e-Sharif, but international workers are commuting during daylight hours from Uzbekistan. Few nongovernmental organizations have international staff inside Afghanistan.

The U.N.'s World Food Program, which announced in mid-November that it had managed to get enough food into Afghanistan to meet current needs, has admitted it lacks the ability to get that food to communities at risk. On Nov. 23, in an unprecedented move, the U.N. program started flying wheat from Tajikistan into the north-eastern Afghan city of Faizabad. The World Food Program plans to send four flights a day, each carrying 17 tons of wheat, for the next several weeks.



The United Christian Youth Fellowship from First United Methodist Church in Lake Providence recently came to the aid of a sight-impaired couple in their community, making repairs on the couple's home and raising funds for additional remodeling with the help of local officials.

Lake Providence youth aid blind couple

In the spring, the United Christian Youth Fellowship from First United Methodist Church in Lake Providence heard about a local blind couple who needed repairs done on their home. Through the assistance of Mayor Bobby Amacker and Jack Hamilton of the Community Renewal Corporation and local attorney Jim Crigler, money was raised to pay for the necessary remodeling on the home of Wilson and Katheryn Oliney.

Susie McKenzie, the UCYF adult sponsor, talked with Hamilton about the possibility of the youth group helping with this project. During past summers, the youth fellowship has traveled to New Mexico, Michigan, Pennsylvania and North Carolina repairing, painting and working on homes of elderly and needy families.

Since the local group had not planned on going to a work camp this summer, the opportunity to work in Lake Providence seemed like a perfect solution to their ongoing mission work for the needy.

The experience this summer was not only helpful for the recipient couple in getting their home repaired, but also proved a very rewarding experience for the youth and adult workers on the project.

Assisting in making repairs to the home of this local couple were Amy Amacker, Michael Meadows, Mindy Oswalt, Cain Oswalt, Carleigh Keene, Mary Kathryn Schneider, Madelyn Schneider, Kanna Shepherd, Sarah Beth Fairchild, Matt Funderburk, Brad Funderburk, Mary Frances Hopkins, Kyle Love and Matt Landreneau. Adult sponsors were Susie McKenzie, Kathy Holt and Carole Terral.

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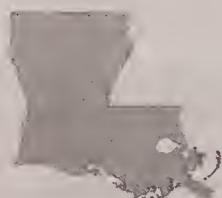


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Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



Photo by Joshua Lewis

Four year-olds in the preschool at First United Methodist Church in Lake Charles practice for the annual Christmas pageant.

Alexandria District welcomes new missionary

Rev. Dick Hooton will assume the duties of District Missioner for the Alexandria District beginning Jan. 1, 2002. He replaces Richard Bushnell, who has been appointed as new director for the Conference Center in Woodworth.



Hooton

Hooton will continue to serve as pastor for Fellowship United Methodist Church in Hinston, La. as he performs his new duties for the Alexandria District.

"Much like our local congregations can be compared to Paul's image of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12), the same should be true of the church at large. It takes all of us working together to fulfill the mission of the Church."

"I look forward to helping our district churches be more connectional as we go about the business of making and growing disciples for Jesus Christ," said Hooton.

Sarah Willis, coordinator for the District Missioners, said, "I am excited to have Dick as the new Alexandria District Missioner. The missioners will be blessed to have him among us and I look

forward to experiencing the unique gifts and graces that he will bring."

District Missioners serve as members of their respective District Ministry Teams.

The teams are designed to be the primary resourcing group within the district. The DMT maintains a relationship with local churches, providing resources, communicating information, giving ideas and options for ministry, and connecting congregations with persons or other churches with the needed expertise.

Glenmora UMC, formerly pastored by Hooton, will now be served by Rev. Bill McDonald.

United Methodists give more than \$10 million for Sept. 11

United Methodists have given more than \$10 million to the church's special offering in response to the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

More than \$6.4 million was raised in November alone for the special fund. By the end of November, gifts to the "Love in the Midst of Tragedy" fund totaled \$10.4 million. The church's response to

the attacks is being channeled through the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), the denomination's relief and development agency.

"When there is a need, United Methodists respond," said Sandra Kelley Lackore, treasurer of the church and staff head of its General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) in

Evanston, Ill.

From the time of the attacks, local churches in New York, the Washington area and central Pennsylvania have opened their doors and reached out to offer food and water, comfort and child care, and counseling and practical aid, such as help in filling out claim forms for assistance from various agencies.

ON THE JOURNEY

Hidden

"The figures of the crèche are hidden somewhere in the church and we just haven't been able to find them." I was in one of our Louisiana churches this past Sunday as a guest preacher. At the lighting of the Advent Candles a family came forth to read the traditional lesson. While they were reading another family came forward with a figure of one of the principal characters in the nativity scene and placed that figure in the small crèche on the altar table. It was a beautiful symbolic gesture.

Following the service the pastor said to me, "These figures on the altar are so small. We have larger figures, but they are hidden somewhere in the church and we just haven't been able to find them." My immediate thought was, "That's the modern story of the church!"

The plight of the larger figures being hidden somewhere in the church is the tale in so many of our fellowships. It's easy to let the smaller situations of the church so dominate our attention that we become smaller figures as a result. When we become primarily concerned about the color of the carpet and who has offended who this time, we are reduced to a smaller figure. Fixation on the mundane moves the larger figures of the faith into the shadows of the church and they have little influence in our day-to-day thinking and activity. Today's modern players in the Jesus story often are so caught up in the frantic and smaller day-to-day activity of "institutional church" that they are impeded in being the spiritual body of Christ. Sometimes the larger figures opt out of the forefront and sit quietly in the background without disturbing others with their spiritual quest. Figuratively, we have many of the larger figures who are hidden somewhere in the church and are not easily found.

Have we gone looking for them? Have we plumbed the depths of our churches for those who can lead us in the spiritual formation that is so necessary for our life together as a body of Christ? Have we personally stood and looked at the child of the manger long enough that we want to be like him and will do whatever we have to do to accomplish that? Have we seriously looked for the larger figures so that we might be led to be the disciples Jesus calls us to be?

What does it take to call forth the giant servants of God? Does it take a September 11, 2001? Does it take a "War on Terrorism"? Does it take a crisis in the church? What does it take for the giant servants to become visible



Bishop William W. Hutchinson

and readily accessible? Whatever it takes, it is the time for the giants to step forward.

David Ogilvy, founder of the giant advertising agency Ogilvy and Mather, used to give each new manager a Russian doll. The doll contained five progressively smaller dolls.

A message inside the smallest one read: "If each of us hires people who are smaller than we are, we shall become a company of dwarfs. But if each of us hires people who are bigger than we are, Ogilvy and Mather will become a company of giants."

The same principle holds true for the church of Jesus Christ. If each of us is about the business of encouraging others as well as ourselves to become greater than we are and we are helping them and ourselves to grow in love for our Lord beyond our limited understanding, we will become a church of giants. But if we are persons who criticize others and limit them to our opinion, or if we are in the habit of reducing ourselves to mundane and small minds and tasks then we will become a church of dwarfs.

It's time for us to move beyond the easy and small existence as followers of Christ. It is time for us to become the larger figures that are hidden somewhere in the church and that are so desperately needed to sit on the altar and make a much more visible showing! Isn't that what brought heaven to earth on that angel-filled night in Judea? God was ready for us to make a giant step forward in knowing who God is and in following and serving in the heavenly kingdom.

Where are you in your journey this Christmas? Are you a small character in the life of God's church? Are you a larger figure that is hidden somewhere in the church and no one can find you? Are you ready to become a larger figure than you are? Where are you? Are you ready to be found? Isn't it time you stepped forth and became the large figure you are created to be?

May the larger than life Christ bring a blessed and growth-filled Christmas to each of you.

In Christ,

Bill Hutchinson



A UMNS photo by John C. Goodwin.

A 45-foot-high billboard in the Wall Street district of Manhattan, just two blocks from ground zero, is offering passersby a word of encouragement from United Methodists. Erected Nov. 29, the billboard is part of a major national Igniting Ministry media campaign directed by United Methodist Communications, a church agency based in Nashville, Tenn. During the next three months, more than 600,000 people a day are expected to see the billboard, according to outdoor advertising officials.

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Rena Yocom	Executive Director, Conference Mission and Ministries
Betty Backstrom	Editor
Joshua Lewis	Contributing Editor

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<http://www.la-umc.org>

Youth Director Position

First United Methodist Church of Denham Springs is accepting applications for a part-time Youth Director, with full-time employment during the summer. The successful applicant will be a mature Christian with good organizational skills. Compensation is \$8,000 per year, based on 10 hours per week during the school year and 40 hours per week during the summer. Interested applicants should send their resume to Rev. Monica Monk, First United Methodist Church, 319 Mattie Street, Denham Springs, LA 70726. Phone: 225/665-8895, Fax: 225/665-7040, Website: www.fumcds.org, E-mail: AssocPastor@fumcds.org.

Notification of Retirement

Paragraph 356 of the 2000 Book of Discipline states that requests for retirement shall be stated in writing to the bishop, cabinet, and board of ordained ministry at least one hundred twenty days prior to the date on which retirement is to be effective. If you plan to retire at the next session of Annual Conference, notification should be received by those listed above by Feb. 1, 2002. The processing of a clergy's retirement may be delayed if this timeframe is not met.

Important IRS Notice for Pastors and Treasurers

Effective Jan. 1, 2002, the mileage rate for travel will be increased by the Internal Revenue Service to 36.5 cents per mile.



VIM Update

January 2002

"Making A Christian Difference"



Members of Volunteers in Mission teams from around the La. Conference gathered in New Orleans to build ramps for the disabled during *Takin' It to the Streets* 2001.



FROM THE DIRECTOR...

The organization of Louisiana Conference Volunteers in Mission has now been a reality for just less than five years. In that time several thousand of our lay and clergy have said "yes" to the call and claim of mission that our faith places on our lives.

Homes have been built or repaired in Mexico, El Salvador, Kentucky and Honduras. Clinics, churches, parsonages, refugee centers, Sunday School and fellowship buildings have been constructed or restored in South Africa, Spain, Alaska, Bolivia, Red Bird, Russia, Dulac, OIMC, Ecuador, Louisiana, Mississippi and Puerto Rico, to name only a few. Hundreds of thousands of dollars of medicines, eye glasses, health and hospital supplies have been delivered and distributed in Mexico, Bolivia, Haiti and Cuba. Ramps for the disabled have been built throughout the Conference. Pain has been relieved, infections stopped, hope instilled, and in one case, a young boy suffering from pneumonia in the high Andes, a life saved. And in all of this, most importantly, the human touch of Christ has made a "Christian Difference" in the lives of those to whom we have gone in mission and missionary alike.

VIM Update, a special insert of *La. Now!*, is your invitation to answer the call to mission for the first time, or, to say "yes" once again. Read it carefully and prayerfully. Each of us is a missionary. Our experience of God in Christ makes us so. But how and where will you be in mission? Perhaps in these pages lie the inspiration and the answers...

Larry D. Norman

VIM takes it to the streets of Central Louisiana for 2002

LAVIM's third year of building ramps for the disabled will take place in the Pineville/Alexandria area during 2002. Teams and individuals are invited to converge on First UMC, Pineville, on Friday, March 15, beginning at 7:00 p.m., for the weekend's kick-off celebration.

Visiting volunteers will meet with local team captains following the Friday night gathering to receive ramp plans and assignments. After breakfast and

group worship on Saturday teams will meet their families and begin their task. A Saturday evening event at the Alexandria Zoo will feature fun, food, speakers and an "after-hours" visit with the zoo's animal residents. On Sunday morning, teams will resume ramp building after a group gathering and breakfast, and a closing celebration will take place at Pineville First. Each group or individual is asked to be present

throughout the full three days so ramp projects may be completed.

A cost of \$25.00 per person (\$35 after March 1) includes the Friday night meal and celebration, breakfast, lunch and zoo celebration on Saturday, breakfast and worship celebration on Sunday. Lodging is available in some local churches and camp facilities or in local hotels at your own expense. A listing of housing options is available upon

request with your reservation. All group meetings will be held at Pineville First UMC, 2550 Monroe Highway, Pineville, LA.

Each volunteer should bring hammer, tape measure, safety glasses, nail apron, and gloves. Teams should bring Skill saws, drills, extension cords, etc. Each team should include at least one skilled or experienced carpenter. Call the LAVIM office for registration info at (888) 239-5286.

Louisiana VIM mission schedule 2002

In the United States

	LOCATION	TEAM LEADER	COST	TASK
ARKANSAS				
March 31 - April 6	Mount Sequoyah	Judi Robertson	\$180	Repair/Construction
Sept. 15-21	Mount Sequoyah	Sam Burch	\$180	Repair/Construction
CALIFORNIA				
August 11-18	Oakland	Debbie Peplow	\$725	Repair/Construction
KENTUCKY				
April 13-21	Red Bird Mission	Weldon Bares	\$435	Construction
April 20-28	Red Bird Mission	Gene Faurie	\$425	Construction
Aug. 24-Sept. 1	Red Bird Mission	Charles Langford	\$475	Construction
Sept. 21-29	Red Bird Mission	Wybra Price	\$475	Construction
LOUISIANA				
April 28-May 2	Sager-Brown	Rachel Scott	\$205	Repair/Construction
MISSISSIPPI				
April 21-25	Gulfside Assembly	Robert Ross	\$140	Repair/Construction
June 15-22	Choctaw UM Mission/ Philadelphia, MS	Steve Porter	\$160	VBS/Repair
June 27-30	Choctaw UM Mission/Philadelphia, MS	Debbie Peplow	\$150	Repair/Construction
OKLAHOMA				
June 22-29	Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference	Jon Lord	\$210	Repair/Construction
TEXAS				
Spring	San Pablo UMC/ Ft.Worth, TX	James Poole	Approx. \$200	Construction
FAMILY MISSION PROJECT				
July 25-28	Christian Alliance/ Medical Bridges	Ann Sutton	\$125	Disaster Response
YOUNG ADULT MISSION PROJECT				
May 26-June 1	Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference	Donnie Wilkinson	\$260	Repair/Construction
YOUTH IN MISSION PROJECTS				
June 23-30	Christian Alliance/ Medical Bridges	Ramonalynn Bethley	\$250	Disaster Response
June 21-30	Church of the Savior/ Washington, D.C.	Lisa Turnbull	\$400	Inner City Projects
July 21-27	Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference	LAVIM	\$340	Repair/Construction

International

	LOCATION	TEAM LEADER	COST	TASK
AFRICA				
April 5-17	Africa University	Don Avery	\$2675	Construction
April 18-May 1	Johannesburg, SA	Dale Hensarling	\$2600	Construction
Sept. 19-Oct. 2	Africa University	Bill Hutchinson/ Larry Norman	\$2675	Construction
BOLIVIA				
June 20-30	Oruro	Don Nugent	\$1345	Construction
November 7-17	LaPaz	Scott Bullock	\$1310	Medical
ECUADOR				
July 14-22	Quito	Robbie Dunham	\$1460	Construction
EL SALVADOR				
February 22-Mar. 2	Ahuachapan	Tony Fontenot	\$960	Construction
March 24-31	Ahuachapan	Judy Shema	\$900	Construction
May 15-25	Ahuachapan	Clay Williams	\$1260	Construction
Nov. 22-Dec. 1	Ahuachapan	Kathy Fitzhugh	\$1010	Construction
HONDURAS				
October 18-26	Tegucigalpa	Paula Jones	\$980	Construction
LITHUANIA				
August 9-20	Kaunas	Dick Hooten	\$1730	Construction
MEXICO CONSTRUCTION				
February 16-23	Reynosa	Terry Love	\$200	Construction
April 19-27	Reynosa	Don Ross	\$385	Construction
July 27-August 3	Reynosa	Bob Emmanuel	TBA	Construction
RUSSIA				
June 11-21	Ekaterinburg	Amy Mercer	Each mission approx.	Construction/ Education
March 22-30	Ekaterinburg	James Gillespie	\$2000	Construction

LAVIM

What and Where

AFRICA UNIVERSITY, ZIMBABWE - Construction, upkeep and repair of University facilities.

BOLIVIA - Construction of churches and parsonages, and mobile medical clinics in the Andes Mountains.

CALIFORNIA - Repair of inner city youth home.

CHOCTAW UM MISSION - VBS and building repair and roofing at United Methodist ministry near Philadelphia, Miss.

CHRISTIAN ALLIANCE/MEDICAL BRIDGES - Repacking, organizing and preparation for exporting of medical supplies and food stuffs to be used in world wide disaster response.

CHURCH OF THE SAVIOR, WASHINGTON, DC - Work with inner city youth and upkeep and repair of homeless facilities. For youth only.

ECUADOR - Church mission facility and day care center construction or repair and medical support for SIFAT day care centers.

EKATERINBURG, RUSSIA - VBS, Bible study, day camps, building repair and work in orphanages.

EL SALVADOR - Home building response to devastating earthquakes.

GULFSIDE ASSEMBLY - Construction and repair of UM camping facility in Mississippi.

HONDURAS - Continued home building response to Hurricane Mitch.

LITHUANIA - Construction and repair of church facilities. Day school work with children.

MEXICO CONSTRUCTION - Repair of San Pablo District sanctuaries and other church owned facilities.

MEXICO MINI MEDICAL/CONSTRUCTION - Remote medical clinics and repair of churches and parsonages and construction of VIM team facility.

MOUNT SEQUOYAH - Upkeep and repair of facilities, landscape work at SCJ Center for Older Adult Ministries.

OIMC (Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference) - Construction of church buildings and camps in Native American UM conference.

RED BIRD MISSIONARY CONFERENCE - Home repair and construction, mission facility upkeep in Appalachia.

SAGER-BROWN - Repair work on homes of needy families in the Baldwin area. Repacking work in UMCOR Depot.

SAN PABLO UMC - Construction of Hispanic church in Fort Worth.

SOUTH AFRICA - Building of church/day care facilities in black African townships near Johannesburg.

TAKIN IT TO THE STREETS - Building access ramps for the disabled.

Reynosa

MINI-MEDICAL/CONSTRUCTION



In 2002, the mission destination of the Louisiana Volunteers in Mission Mini-Medical/Construction teams will again be Reynosa, Mexico.

Reynosa is located immediately across the border from McAllen, Tex. Each year a number of mini-medical/construction teams are scheduled as well as several construction-only

and youth teams.

LAVIM teams will work under the direction of Dr. Saul Supulvada, director of Clinica Bretania, a Mexican Methodist church sponsored clinic in the city.

Medical teams will work at temporary clinic locations providing maintenance medical assistance in the five "colonias," or neighborhoods, surrounding the

city. Temporary pharmacies will also be set up.

Construction team members will help in the construction of sanctuaries, parsonages and renovation of church facilities.

Each medical team should consist of at least one general practitioner, a dentist, optometrist, nurses, pediatrician and pharmacist. Spanish translators are helpful, as are lay helpers for patient

registration and record keeping.

Professionals and experts are always welcome on construction missions, but "handy" persons and home repair amateurs comprise most teams.

For specific information on costs, lodging, meals, what to bring, and insurance, call or write the LAVIM office using the form provided below.

REYNOSA, MEXICO, 2002 MINI-MEDICAL/CONSTRUCTION - \$380 per person

January 3-6	Karolyn Maughan
January 24-27	LAVIM
February 7-10	LAVIM
Feb. 28-Mar. 3	Diane Wilkerson
March 7-10	Tom Dungan
March 28-31	Mark Williams
April 4-7	Quinn O'Bannon
April 22-28	Gloria Robinson
May 2-5	Dick Humphries
May 23-26	John Bergsted
June 6-9	Pat and Ron Rice
June 27-30	Sarah Timberlake
July 4-7	Lys Cockrell/Frances Guy
July 25-28	Gary Willis
August 1-4	Mike McLaurin
August 22-25	Doug Cain
September 5-8	Bubba Penick
Sept. 26-29	Quinn O'Bannon
October 3-6	Karen Rue
October 24-27	Tom Dungan
November 7-10	Mark Williams
Nov. 28-Dec. 1	Jim Maker
December 5-8	Roger Templeton

REYNOSA, MEXICO, 2003 MINI-MEDICAL/CONSTRUCTION

January 2-5	July 3-6
January 16-19	July 17-20
February 6-9	August 7-10
February 20-23	August 21-24
March 6-9	September 4-7
March 20-23	September 18-21
April 3-6	October 2-5
April 24-27	October 16-19
May 1-4	November 6-9
May 15-18	November 20-23
June 5-8	December 4-7
June 19-22	

General Information Request Form

FOR MORE INFORMATION COMPLETE AND SEND TO:

LARRY D. NORMAN, VIM Director

527 NORTH BLVD., BATON ROUGE, LA 70802

225-346-1646, 1-888-239-5286 FAX 225-383-3144, E-mail: LduckN@aol.com

DATE: _____

Please send me more information about the following missions:

Name _____ Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Fax _____ E-mail _____ District _____

Church _____ Pastor's Name _____

VIM Service/Gifts _____

(E.g. medical, carpentry, construction, contractor, cook, general helper,...the list is unlimited)

VIM Mission Interest (Please be Specific) _____

Youth in Mission teams enter fifth year of Christian service

Youth in Mission 2002 will be serving the needy of Washington, D.C., and the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference in the months of June and July this coming year.

This is the first year for a LAVIM Youth in Mission team to travel to our nation's capital, working with the many ministries of Church of the Savior.

Youth volunteers will be assigned to work opportunities such as helping with inner city youth activities; painting or repair of homeless shelters; preparing and serving meals; and landscaping or cleaning projects.

The team will lodge at the Quaker Seminar and Hospitality Center on Capitol Hill in Washington.

Team members will be picked up in church vans at various points across the Conference on Friday, June 21. The group travels back to Louisiana on June 30.

Cost for the mission is \$400, and includes travel, lodging, VIM t-shirt, secondary insurance and materials donation. Lunch and dinner meals are not included in the cost. A deposit of \$150 is due no later than May 1 and full fees are due by May 20.

Each participant in any VIM experience is required to have primary medical insurance.

For the third year, junior and senior high youth will travel to Houston, Tex. to serve Medical Bridges and Christian Alliance for Humanitarian Aid.

Medical Bridges collects and distributes medical and surgical supplies for use in underdeveloped countries.

It serves as a clearing house for recycling useable equipment and supplies gleaned from hospitals, clinics,

physicians offices and other medical facilities.

Christian Alliance provides for emergency needs by gathering supplies, storing and then transporting them to disaster affected areas.

After volunteering for these organizations, the youth volunteers will make a side trip to AstroWorld on Saturday, June 29.

The team will stay at St. Luke's UMC. Meals will be ordered out or enjoyed in restaurants.

A church bus will pick up volunteers at various points throughout the conference on Sunday, June 23. The team will return home June 30.

Cost of the mission is \$250, which includes transportation, lodging, most meals, secondary insurance, t-shirt and ticket to AstroWorld.

The deposit of \$150 is due May 1, with remaining fees due May 20. The mission is limited to 12 participants.

Junior and senior high youth will also have similar volunteer opportunities at the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference.

A project coordinator who is a member of the Native American congregation will oversee the volunteers.

Team members will be housed at a local church. Meal cost is included and will be prepared by the team.

Central locations will be established where volunteers can meet for transportation to Oklahoma. Travel begins on Saturday, July 21. The return home is scheduled for July 27.

Cost for this mission opportunity is \$340.

A deposit of \$150 is due June 1, with remaining fees due June 20. Fees include travel, lodging, meals, registration, t-shirt, materials cost and secondary insurance.



Volunteers in style

Director Larry Norman and a crew of volunteers show their sense of style with polos and t-shirts bearing the Volunteers in Mission logo. To order, call the LAVIM office at (888) 239-5286.

LAVIM announces new family mission team

What if your whole family could spend time together, fellowship with families from around the Louisiana Conference, and spend time doing something that would impact the health and nutrition of people around the world? LAVIM's first Family Mission Team is an opportunity in which your whole family can participate this summer, July 25-28, doing just that.

Missioners will depart from Lafayette, LA, Asbury UMC, on Thursday, July 25, and travel by bus to Pearland, Tex. Accommodations will be at the Pearland Best Western Hotel.

The first evening will be filled with fun and games to allow the team to get to know each other and to learn more about mission.

Families will be organized into work teams for Friday and Saturday and the

work will be divided between packing food items at Christian Alliance for Humanitarian Service, and sorting and packing medical supplies at Medical Bridges, Inc. Both of these agencies ship containers of supplies to people around the world, particularly third world countries suffering from disasters. The entire team, Mom, Dad and children of all ages will lend a helping hand!

The mission will conclude on Sunday with a worship service unique to the Houston area and a visit to the Johnson Space Center. Cost for the mission is \$125.00 per person.

Registration must be received no later than July 1, 2002. Fill out the information request form on the team calendar page or contact Rev. Ann Sutton (337) 984-4211 or Rev. Larry Norman (888) 239-5286 for more info.



LAVIM Celebration 2002
November 1-2
FUMC Alexandria

Exhibits - Worship - International Speakers - Workshops - Team Reunions

Watch the summer issues of Louisiana NOW for information and registration. Mark your calendars NOW for this exciting event! Bishop William Hutchinson, Louisiana, Bishop Ruediger R. Minor, Russia, and Bishop Muvme Dandala, The Methodist Church of South Africa, are presently scheduled to speak.

*When all of LAVIM comes together
to Celebrate our call to mission!*



CONVERSATIONAL SPANISH CLASSES

FOR LOUISIANA VIM TEAM MEMBERS

Louisiana Conference Center

January 17, 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

\$25.00 (includes lunch and materials)

Course includes basic Spanish words and phrases

Taught by GBGM Missionaries

Maribel Mojica Calvo and Saray Calvo

of the Louisiana Conference

New Orleans Hispanic Ministry



Church observes World AIDS day

World AIDS Day 2001—"I Care—Do You?" This is the theme for the 11th annual World AIDS Day Prayer Service celebrated at Warren United Methodist Church Dec. 3.

Eleven years ago, a small group of people in Lake Charles—Father Mark Broussard and others—organized the first World AIDS Day worship service in the Lake Charles area.

Since that time, the service has moved through the community to a variety of churches with many local clergy assisting in the liturgy and planning for the service.

"The World AIDS Day worship service is an opportunity for family members, friends, caregivers and volunteers to gather to sing and to pray, to remember and to share, and to keep forward the vision of hope and a cure for this devastating illness," says Marilyn Dunn, executive director of the Southwest Louisiana AIDS Council.

The emphasis in the theme for this year's service is "Youth and AIDS in

the 21st century."

This year's service featured youth from the Lake Charles area, such as the CYO Dance Team and the Christian Baptist Youth Choir. A special poem, written and read by local poet Donald Roy was also a part of the service. Youth motivational speaker Brian Beverly gave the message for the evening. There were more than 200 in attendance.

A special part of the evening was the time of prayer and remembrance. At this time, candles were lit and the names of those living with the illness and those who have finished their course and are now at rest in the communion of saints were called. This year, there were two memorial panels that were dedicated. One panel remembers women in southwest Louisiana who have died of AIDS and the second panel remembers an individual in the Lake Charles community who has died of AIDS. These panels will be sent to be enjoined to the NAMES Project-AIDS Memorial Quilt.



Members of Oak Park United Methodist Church in Lake Charles celebrated Veterans Day with a unique service one led entirely by retired service men and their spouses. An extraordinary percentage of the members of Oak Park have served in the Armed Forces, many of them having seen combat in the Pacific, Korea and the Gulf War. Rufus Marshall preached the sermon.

Praise and Worship

Regularly, youth from throughout the Lake Charles District come together for Praise and Worship Services, better known as P & Ws. These P&Ws are always lots of fun. The purpose of P&Ws is to praise the Lord. First, there is a DCYM (District Council of Youth Ministries) meeting. It is also a great excuse to get together with friends for games and food. There's plenty of time to both socialize and praise in the two hours.

When a person goes to a P&W, they can expect to do different things. First is the DCYM meeting where we discuss upcoming events and projects. For those that aren't on DCYM, there is a game or activity planned. As soon as the meeting is over, we say a group blessing then it's time for the grub. The host church provides food for only \$1 per person. Dinner is the time for chit-chat and conversation. It's a great time to share what's been going on in other churches around the district as old friends get together and new friends meet. After dinner is over, everyone heads to the sanctuary for the service. It is there that we praise God through music, prayer, communion, and skits. The last service was led by University UMC's praise band J-Walkin.

Sound like fun to you? If the answer is yes then please join us on January 6, 2002, at Moss Bluff United Methodist Church. The DCYM meeting will be at 3 p.m. and dinner is served at 4 p.m. We will be finished by 6 p.m., so please join in!



From the District Superintendent's Pen

As I write this piece for the next issue of the Louisiana NOW, I can hear the laughter of happy children in the playground outside my office. The sounds are absolutely wonderful to my ears as I imagine their joy of being outside on a crisp fall day when the sunshine is brightly beaming and the air is "just right" – not too cold, not too hot. Indeed, it is one of those days when it is perfect for taking a walk along the lakefront; strolling through the park; planting some flowers; sitting outside reading a favorite book or simply pausing to thank God for a Day of Grace.

It is also the week-end of the beginning of Advent, the season of Anticipation! It is a time "to come to." It is a season of getting ready for, a time when we expect the coming of Christ – The Second Time around! My hunch is that as we continue to live away from the days of September 11, 2001, we are still trying to fathom HOW? WHY? WHAT NEXT? The truth of the matter is that we are all living literally "one breath at a time".

It then is incumbent upon us to literally do what we can while we have time. It is about learning to live what John Wesley called "the means of Grace." As disciples of Jesus Christ, we must not simply become persons who sit idly and "wait."

We are to hear the invitation from our Lord and actively pursue peace, equity, justice, harmony and forgiveness here on earth. It is about creating a counter-culture where we eliminate greed, selfishness, dishonesty, prejudices and intolerance.

Make no mistake about it friends, our world, as we have known it, has been transformed. The question is,



Henderson

how long will we remember those tragic moments when the entire world was stunned into unimaginable disbelief when the twin towers came tumbling down? My prayer is that we will keep before us the fact that malice, hatred, uncontrolled anger, intolerance, selfishness, etc., will most likely lead to some kind of destruction. Let us endeavor to create a climate of Shalom on this side of life. I believe that the place to begin is within each person as we take the inward journey to determine where we need to grow individually-spiritually. As we gather at the various places of worship, our collective spirits of goodwill can only spark a climate of Christian Community.

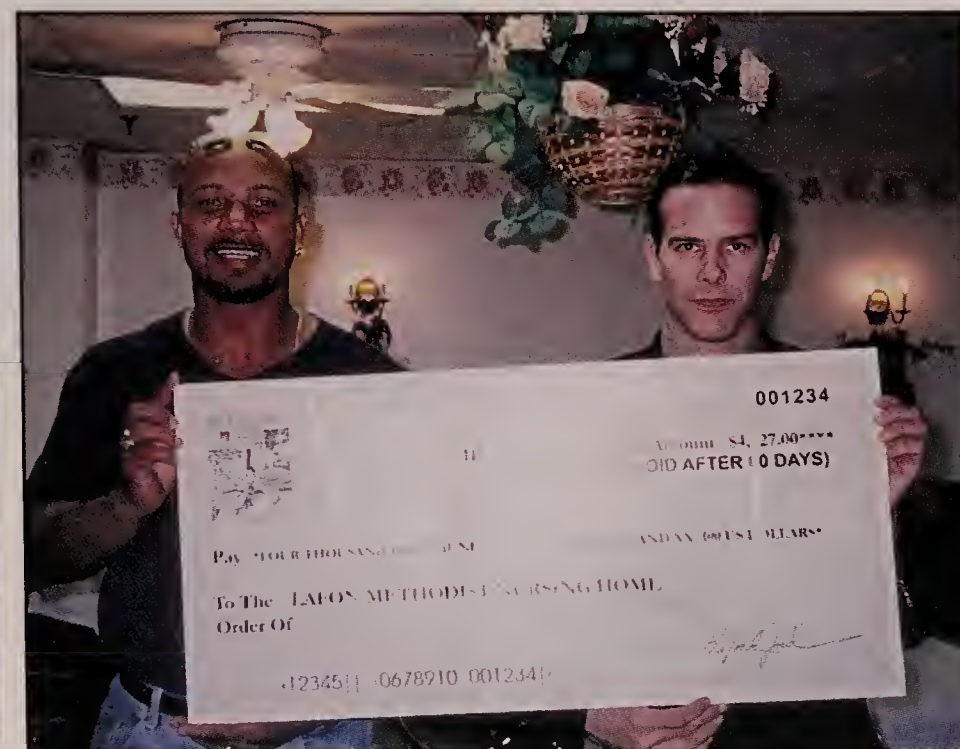
We will celebrate through Advent and sing our carols during Christmas, as we will move into the YK02 with all of the revelry that accompanies this newness. Let us end the year with excitement and thanksgiving for Immanuel! Let us also begin the next year with the fact that God will give us strength for the long haul. As we shed the things that hold us back and better the strengths that we have, my prayer is that we will utilize the gifts of the spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Happy Holidays!

Remember, God is good...ALL the time!

Shalom on the Journey!

Rev. Freddie C. Henderson



Former New Orleans Saints football player Buford Jordan, left, presents a \$4,427 check to Lafon Home Administrator Gordon Dickinson. The check represented proceeds from the annual Buford Jordan Golf Tournament that benefits the home. Next year the tournament will be renamed the Buford Jordan and Richard Cooper Golf Tournament. Another former Saint, Cooper has also been a long-time friend to the home. He has worked with the home's Mardi Gras program and the annual A Jazzy Night in June fundraiser.

St. Matthew youth organize food drive

The youth group of St. Mathew UMC in Algiers has made a self-challenge to raise \$100 and collect two boxes of food items for the Second Harvesters Food Bank which services the Greater New Orleans area.

Since the terrorist attack of September 11, the food bank has experienced increased demand to help individuals and families, thereby finding funds and food items low at the holiday time. The youth of St. Matthew UMC

have over the years donated to the food bank or distributed baskets to the needy of the community. Rev. Andrew J. Douglas, pastor, acknowledged the youth department as they announced the program to the congregation.

St. Matthew youth would like to encourage youth groups around the New Orleans District to pick up the challenge by selecting a month in 2002, raise \$100 and collect food items for the Second Harvesters Food Bank.

St. Paul's UMC celebrates sixtieth birthday

BY GAYE GROSZDZ

On November 11, St. Paul's United Methodist Church celebrated its 60th birthday. On November 9, 1941, then District Superintendent Gunn held a meeting to organize Harahan Methodist Church and seven members were present. In 1944, a small sanctuary was built and Reverend Karl Tooke was assigned

as part-time pastor. On November 10, 1945, the church was dedicated, with Reverend Bob Jamieson as pastor. In 1954, Harahan Methodist Church changed its name to St. Paul's Methodist Church and in 1968 became St. Paul's United Methodist Church. There have been 15 pastors over the years. The current pastor is Reverend Ellen Blue.

Sons and Daughters honor Lula Mae Wade

BY DORIS BELL

The Conference Sons and Daughters Auxiliary of Mt. Zion UMC in New Orleans observed its 101st anniversary Sunday, November 18.

"Celebrating 101 Years of Christian Service" was the theme for the 3:00 pm musical program. The Conference Sons and Daughters Auxiliary of Mt Zion financially supports annual conference activities and funds needs of the church. Mrs. Doris B. Bell serves as president. In addition, the Sons and Daughters support outreach programs of the New Orleans community, including Bibles to the homeless, volunteer work at the Methodist Home, books to Dulac Community Center and Covenant House, among others.

Mrs. Lula Mae Wade, the honoree for

the program, is the longest serving member of the organization with over 50 years of service to the group. She recently moved to Columbia, South Carolina, to be near family but returned to New Orleans to be a part of the celebration.

Send your church's stories to the New Orleans District Office:

Shirley Jakway
3401 Canal St.
New Orleans, LA 70119
(504) 488-5430
(504) 488-5431
nodistumc@aol.com

Church Leadership Training

Jan. 12, 2002, 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Lake Vista United Methodist Church, 6645 Spanish Fort Blvd.

Topics include: Administrative Council, Finance, Worship and more!
Contact Barbara Murray (504) 488-5430 or the District office for more information.



St. Charles United Methodist Church in Destrehan recently purchased a new 15-passenger van through a special fundraising program that returns funds to the church from participating businesses where church members shop. The church's next goal is to acquire a sound and light system for its fellowship hall and a copier for the church office. For more information, contact Mary Anne Schindler at (504) 466-4144.